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EVANS' SKETCHES.



✓ Evans' Sketch  
EVANS' SKETCH

OF THE

DENOMINATIONS

OF THE

CHRISTIAN WORLD.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED AN ACCOUNT OF

ATHEISM, DEISM, THEOPHILANTHROPISM, JUDAISM,  
MAHOMETANISM, AND CHRISTIANITY.

CORRECTED AND ENLARGED FROM THE SEVENTH EDITION,

By JAMES AIKMAN, Esq.

AUTHOR OF THE HISTORY OF SCOTLAND, &c. &c. &c.

WITH AN APPENDIX,

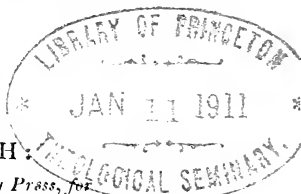
GIVING A SHORT VIEW OF THE ROW HERESY.

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EDINBURGH:

*Printed at the University Press, for*

THOMAS NELSON AND PETER BROWN

1831.





## ADVERTISEMENT.

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THIS edition of Evans' Sketch of all Denominations is partly a republication of the seventh of that work, printed 1802, with considerable alterations, and great additions.

When I undertook, at the request of the present publishers, the editing of this small volume, I intended merely to have made the necessary corrections and additions on the articles relative to the Scottish sects, in which it was essentially erroneous or defective; but when I began to examine it, I found it needed a more extensive revision. The object being to keep it as nearly as possible about the original price, I was constrained to keep within a limited space; by adopting, however, a smaller letter, and closer, and more economical mode of printing, this object has been obtained, although about a half of new matter has been added. The additions have been chiefly made with regard to the more important denominations, those which promise to be the most permanent and stable. The ephemeral sects which attract notice for a day, and are forgot, have been in general passed over, although they might have furnished a volume; but being interesting only to their own small circles,

would have swelled, without increasing the value of the book.

There are two material alterations in this Sketch which I beg to point out. In the original, Mr. E. had thrust in his Socinian sentiments into almost every article. These I have expunged; and in the view of Christian doctrine, I have adopted that in consonance with our own Confession of Faith, and expressed it nearly in the language of Scripture. The other is, entirely omitting several of his long tirades about liberality, and unity, and charity among Christians. Not that I think charity an unlovely or unattainable virtue; but his idea of a Presbyterian and a Roman Catholic meeting together, and a Calvinist and a Socinian embracing each other, is utterly impracticable, without a sacrifice of truth on the one side, and of integrity upon both.

For those articles marked in the table of contents with a \*, for the additions which follow the short dashes in the different articles, and for all the notes separated by a line from the text, I am accountable. The notice respecting the Quakers was furnished me by a member of the Society, not more esteemed for his exertions in the cause of humanity, than eminent for his literary talents.

J. A.

*Edinburgh, 1831.*

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*N. B.*—The articles marked with a † have been altered in this edition; those marked \* are original.



A

# SKETCH,

§c. §c.

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The great lesson which every sect, and every individual of every sect, ought to learn from the history of the Church is *Moderation*. Want of genuine Moderation towards those who differ from us in religious opinions seems to be the most unaccountable thing in the world.

WATSON, *Bishop of Landaff*.

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## INTRODUCTION.

THE Christian world is divided into denominations, each of which is discriminated by sentiments peculiar to itself. To delineate the nature, point out the foundation, and appreciate the tendency of every individual opinion, would be an endless task. My only design is briefly to enumerate the leading tenets of the several parties which attract our notice, and to make this variety of religious opinions a ground for the exercise of moderation, together with the improvement of other Christian graces. The moderation here recommended, lies at an equal distance between an indifference to truth and the merciless spirit of uncharitableness. It is a virtue much talked of, little understood, and less practised.

But before we delineate the tenets of the several parties, we shall just notice the Atheist and Deist, two de-

scriptions of persons frequently confounded together, and also give a general outline of Theophilanthropism and Paganism, of Judaism, Mahometanism, and Chistianity.\*

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## ATHEISM.

THE *Atheist* does not believe in the existence of a God. He attributes surrounding nature and all its astonishing phænomena to chance, or a fortuitous concourse of atoms. Plato distinguishes three sorts of Atheists ; such as deny absolutely that there are any Gods ; others who allow the existence of the Gods, but deny that they concern themselves with human affairs, and so disbelieve a Providence ; and lastly, such as believe in the Gods and a Providence, but think that they are very easily appeased, and remit the greatest crimes for the smallest supplication. The first of these, however, are the only true Atheists, in the strict and proper sense of the word. The name of *Atheist* is composed of two Greek terms, *a* and *theos*, signifying *without God*, and in this sense the appellation occurs in the New Testament, Ephes. ii. 12. *Without God in the world*. It is to be hoped that *direct* Atheists are few. Some persons, indeed, question the reality of such a character, and others insist, that pretensions to Atheism have their origin in pride, or are adopted as a cloak for licentiousness.

In the seventeenth century, Spinoza, a foreigner, was its

\* These topics will form a proper introduction to an account of the *Sects and Denominations of the RELIGIOUS WORLD*.

noted defender ; and Lucilio Vanini, an Italian, of eccentric character, was burnt, 1619, at Toulouse, for his Atheistical tenets. Being pressed to make public acknowledgment of his crime, and to ask pardon of his God, the king, and justice, he boldly replied, that he did not believe there was a God ; that he never offended the king ; and as for justice, he wished it to the devil. He confessed that he was one of the twelve who parted in company from Naples, to spread their doctrines in all parts of Europe. The poor man, however, ought not to have been put to death ; confinement is the best remedy for insanity. Lord Bacon, in his Essays, justly remarks, that “ A little philosophy inclineth man’s mind to Atheism, but depth in philosophy bringeth men’s minds about to religion ; for while the mind of man looketh upon second causes scattered, it may rest in them and go no farther ; but when it beholdeth the chain of them confederated and linked together, it must needs fly to Providence and Deity.”

Archbishop Tillotson, speaking of Atheism, says, “ For some ages before the reformation, Atheism was confined to Italy, and had its chief residence at Rome. All the mention that is of it in the history of those times, the Papists themselves give us, in the lives of their own popes and cardinals, excepting two or three small philosophers, that were retainers to that court. So that this Atheistical humour amongst Christians was the spawn of the gross superstition and corrupt manners of the Romish church and court.\* And, indeed, nothing

\* Two Popes, it is said, were Atheists ; nor is it at all incredible that the representatives of that man of sin, “ who opposeth and exalteth above

is more natural than for extremes in religion to beget one another, like the vibrations of a *pendulum*, which the more violently you swing in one way, the farther it will return the other. But in this last age, Atheism has travelled over the Alps and infected France, and now of late it hath crossed the seas and invaded our nation, and hath prevailed to amazement !”

The sermons preached at Boyle’s lecture—the discourses of Abernethy on the Divine Attributes, and the treatises of Dr Balguy, are an infallible antidote against Atheistical tenets. This last excellent writer thus forcibly expresses himself on the subject :—

“ Of all the false doctrines and foolish opinions which ever infested the mind of man, nothing can possibly equal that of Atheism, which is such a monstrous contradiction to all evidence, to all the powers of understanding, and the dictates of common sense, that it may be well questioned whether any man can really fall into it by a deliberate use of his judgment. All nature so clearly points out, and so loudly proclaims a Creator of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, that whoever hears not its voice and sees not its proofs, may well be thought wilfully deaf and obstinately blind. If it be evident, self-evident, to every man of thought, that there can be no effect without a cause, what shall we say of that manifold combination of effects, that series of operations, that system of wonders, which fill the universe; which pre-

all that is called God, or that is worshipped, so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God,” 2 Thes. ii. 4. should have been entire unbelievers in the existence of a Deity,—it seems scarcely possible they could be otherwise. These infallible Atheists were their Holinesses John XXVI. and Alexander VI. *Adams’ Religious World*, vol. 3. p. 488.

sent themselves to all our perceptions, and strike our minds and our senses on every side ! Every faculty, every object of every faculty, demonstrates a *Deity*. The meanest insect we can see, the minutest and most contemptible weed we can tread upon, is really sufficient to confound Atheism, and baffle all its pretensions. How much more that astonishing variety and multiplicity of God's works with which we are continually surrounded ! Let any man survey the face of the earth, or lift up his eyes to the firmament ; let him consider the nature and instincts of brute animals, and afterwards look into the operations of his own mind : will he presume to say or suppose that all the objects he meets with are nothing more than the result of unaccountable accidents and blind chance ? Can he possibly conceive that such wonderful order should spring out of confusion ; or that such perfect beauty should be ever formed by the fortuitous operations of unconscious, unactive particles of matter ? As well, nay better, and more easily, might he suppose, that an earthquake might happen to build towns and cities ; or the materials carried down by a flood, fit themselves up without hands into a regular fleet. For what are towns, cities, or fleets, in comparison of the vast and amazing fabric of the universe ! In short, *Atheism* offers such violence to all our faculties, that it seems scarce credible it should ever really find any footing in human understanding."

The arguments for the being of a God are distributed by the learned into two kinds : 1st, Arguments *à priori*, or those taken from the necessity of the divine existence : 2d, Arguments *à posteriori*, or those taken from the works

*of nature.* Of the latter species of proof the above quotation from Dr. Balguy is a fine illustration. On the former see the great Dr. Clarke's Essay on the Being of a God, which has been deemed a master-piece on the subject.

Newton, Boyle, Maclaurin, Ray, Derham, Locke, and other philosophers, distinguished for the profundity of their researches, and the extent of their erudition, are to be enrolled amongst the principal advocates for the existence and superintendence of a Deity. Paley's Natural Theology may be added ; it is clear, elegant, accurate, and unanswerable.

On this subject the celebrated Lord Chesterfield made the following remarkable declaration ; and no man can suppose *his* understanding to have been clouded with *religious* prejudices :—" I have read some of Seed's sermons, and like them very well. But I have neither read nor intend to read those which are meant to prove the existence of God ; because it seems to me too great a disparagement of that *reason* which he has given us to require any other proofs of his existence than those which the whole and every part of the creation afford us. If I believe my own existence, I must believe his : it cannot be proved *à priori*, as some have idly attempted to do, and cannot be doubted of *à posteriori*. Cato says very justly—" *And that he is, all nature cries aloud.*"

The French Convention, 1793, was the only representative assembly of a country that ever presumed to prescribe the belief of a Deity, or attempted to enact by law that it was criminal to consider the idea of a supreme being as any thing more than a philosophical abstraction ;

and the success of their experiment is not likely to tempt a repetition.—If infidelity can persuade men that they will die like beasts, there is no doubt remaining but they will soon be brought to live like beasts also. There is but one thing worse than a speculative Atheist, and that is a practical Atheist ; the world could not endure long a nation of such monsters.

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## DEISTS.

THE *Deists* believe in a God, but reject a written revelation from him. They are extravagant in their encomiums on natural religion, though they differ much respecting its nature, extent, obligation, and importance. Dr. Clarke, in an incomparable Treatise against Deism, divides them into four classes, according to the less or greater number of articles comprised in their creed. “ The *first* are such as pretend to believe the existence of an eternal, infinite, independent, intelligent Being, and who, to avoid the name of Epicurean Atheists, teach also that this supreme Being made the world, though at the same time they agree with the Epicureans in this, that they fancy God does not at all concern himself in the government of the world, nor has any regard to, or care of, what is done therein, agreeably to the reasoning of Lucretius, the Epicurean poet—

For whatsoe'r's divine must live at peace,  
In undisturb'd and everlasting ease;  
Nor care for us, from fears and dangers free,  
Sufficient to his own felicity.  
Nought here below, nought in our pow'r it needs,  
Ne'er smiles at good, nor frowns at wicked deeds.

The *second* sort of Deists are those who believe not only the being but also the providence of God with respect to the *natural* world, but who, not allowing any difference between moral good and evil, deny that God takes any notice of the morally good or evil actions of men, these things depending, as they imagine, on the arbitrary constitution of human laws.

A *third* sort of Deists there are, who seeming to have some right apprehensions concerning the natural attributes of God and his all-governing providence, and some notion of his moral perfections also, yet being prejudiced against the idea of the immortality of the soul, believe that men perish entirely at death, and that one generation shall perpetually succeed another, without any further restoration or renovation of things.

A *fourth* and the last sort of Deists are such as believe the existence of a Supreme Being, together with his providence in the government of the world, also all the obligations of natural religion, but so far only as these things are discoverable by the light of nature alone, without believing any divine revelation." These, the learned author observes, are the only true Deists; but as the principles of these men would naturally lead them to embrace the Christian revelation, he concludes there is now no consistent scheme of Deism in the world. Dr. Clarke then adds these pertinent observations, mingled with a just severity :—" The heathen philosophers, those few of them who taught and lived up to the obligations of natural religion, had indeed a consistent scheme of Deism, as far as it went. But the case is not so now; the same scheme is not any longer consistent with its own



principles, it does not now lead men to believe and embrace revelation, as it then taught them to hope for it. Deists in our days, who reject revelation when offered to them, are not such men as *Socrates* and *Cicero* were, but under pretence of Deism, it is plain they are generally ridiculers of all that is truly excellent in natural religion itself. Their trivial and vain cavils, their mocking and ridiculing without and before examination, their directing the whole stress of objections against particular customs, or particular and perhaps uncertain opinions or explications of opinions, without at all considering the main body of religion, their loose, vain, and frothy discourses, and above all their vicious and immoral lives, shew plainly and undeniably that they are not real *Deists*, but mere *Atheists*, and consequently not capable to judge of the truth of Christianity." But the present Deists are of two sorts only, those who believe, and those who disbelieve in a future state. If a *Theist* [from *theos*, God] be different from a Deist, it is that he has not had revelation proposed to him, and follows therefore the pure light of nature.\*

The term *Deist* comes from the Latin word *Deus*, a God; and is applied to the rejecters of revelation, because the existence of a God is the principal article of their belief. The name was first assumed by a number

\* "The pure light of nature" is a phrase frequently used, but of which it would be difficult to get at the meaning. There is no known state of society to which it can be applied. Wherever there are correct ideas of God or of morals, there Christianity has been heard of. Where these do not exist, even Deists themselves would not contend for the pure light of nature being present. In one or other of these predicaments, the whole of human kind will be found to be placed.

of gentlemen in France and Italy, who were willing to cover their opposition to the Christian revelation by a more honourable name than that of Atheists. Viret, a divine of eminence among the first reformers, appears to have been the first author who expressly mentions them ; for in the Epistle Dedicatory prefixed to the second volume of his *Instruction Chretienne*, published in 1563, he speaks of some persons at that time who called themselves by a new name, that of *Deists*. Deists are also often called *Infidels*, (from the Latin word *infidelis*) on account of their want of faith or belief in the Christian religion. Some have censured the application of the term *infidelity* to unbelievers, contending that in *our* language it is used solely in a particular sense, implying the want of *conjugal fidelity*.\*

Lord Herbert, of Cherbury, was the first Deist who excited public notice in this country. Dr. Brown's recent edition of Leland's *View of the Deistical Writers*, together with many other valuable treatises, afford information concerning their principles, and contain a complete refutation of their objections against revealed religion. Mr. Belsham has thus well assigned the principal causes of modern infidelity in his reply to Mr. Wilberforce. " 1. The first and chief is an unwillingness to submit to the restraints of religion, and the dread of a future life, which leads men to overlook evidence, and to magnify objections. 2. The palpable absurdities of creeds generally professed by Christians, which men of sense

\* A very curious cause of censure ! Nathaniel Bailey in his Dictionary, some century ago, thus defines *Infidelity*—" Unbelief, the state of an unbeliever ; also unfaithfulness, disloyalty."

having confounded with the genuine doctrines of revelation, they have rejected the whole at once, and without inquiry. 3. Impatience and unwillingness to persevere in the laborious task of weighing arguments and examining objections. 4. Fashion has biassed the minds of some young persons of virtuous characters and competent knowledge to resist revelation, in order to avoid the imputation of singularity, and to escape the ridicule of those with whom they desire to associate. 5. Pride, that they might at an easy rate attain the character of philosophers and superiority to vulgar prejudice. 6. Dwelling upon difficulties only from which the most rational system is not exempt, and by which the most candid, inquisitive, and virtuous minds are sometimes entangled. The mass of mankind, who never think at all, but who admit without hesitation "all that the nurse and that the priest have taught," can never become sceptics. Of course, the whole class of unbelievers consists of persons who have thought more or less upon the subject, and as persons of sense seldom discard at once all the principles in which they have been educated, it is not wonderful that many who begin with the highest orthodoxy pass through different stages of their creed, dropping an article or two every step of their progress, till at last, weary of their labour, and not knowing where to fix, they reject it altogether. This, to a superficial and timid observer, appears to be an objection to freedom of inquiry, for no person beginning to inquire, can or ought to say where he will stop. But the sincere friend to truth will not be discouraged. For without inquiry truth cannot be ascertained, and if the Christian religion shrinks from close

examination in this bold and inquisitive age, it must and it ought to fall. But of this issue I have not the smallest apprehension. Genuine Christianity can well bear the fiery trial through which it is now passing, and while the dross and the rubbish are consumed, the pure gold will remain uninjured, and will come forth from the furnace with increased lustre."

Indeed the objections which some Deists have made to revelation, affect not so much the religion of Jesus Christ, laid down in the New Testament, as certain absurd doctrines and ridiculous practices which have been added to it by the weakness and wickedness of mankind. Reiterated accusations therefore of unfairness have been brought against the generality of deistical writers; and with this palpable injustice Bolingbroke, Voltaire, and Thomas Paine stand particularly charged. Paine's *Age of Reason* has been ably answered by many writers, especially by Richard Watson, Bishop of Landaff, in his masterly performance, entitled, *An Apology for the Bible*.

The rejecters of REVELATION (before they thoughtlessly calumniate it) would do well to consider what they are able to give us in its stead, better calculated to alleviate the distresses, and bind up the bleeding heart of humanity.

Dr. Beattie, in the eloquent conclusion of his Essay on the Immutability of Truth, speaking of Sceptics and Deists, very justly remarks:—"Caressed by those who call themselves the great, engrossed by the formalities and fopperies of life, intoxicated with vanity, pampered with adulation, dissipated in the tumult of business, or amidst the vicissitudes of folly, *they* perhaps have little

need and little relish for the consolations of religion ; but let them know, that in the solitary scenes of life there is many an honest and tender heart pining with incurable anguish, pierced with the sharpest sting of disappointment, bereft of friends, chilled with poverty, racked with disease, scourged by the oppressor, whom nothing but trust in Providence, and the hope of a future retribution, could preserve from the agonies of despair. And do they with sacrilegious hands attempt to violate this last refuge of the miserable, and to rob them of the only comfort that had survived the ravages of misfortune, malice, and tyranny ! Did it ever happen that the influence of their tenets disturbed the tranquillity of virtuous retirement, deepened the gloom of human distress, or aggravated the horrors of the grave ? Ye traitors to human kind, ye murderers of the human soul, how can ye answer for it to your own hearts ? Surely every spark of your generosity is extinguished for ever, if *this* consideration do not awaken in you the keenest remorse.” Some admirable strictures on the nature and prevalence of *modern* Deism, are contained in the late Bishop of London’s [Louth] Charge to the Clergy for the year 1794.\*

\* The Gospel Its own Witness, by And. Fuller, is one of the most able and conclusive publications on this subject.

## THEOPHILANTHROPISM.

*Theophilanthropists*, a kind of sentimental Deists, who arose in France during the revolution, and, for a time, made some noise. The name by which they stand distinguished, is a compound term, derived from the Greek, and intimates that they profess *to adore God and love their fellow-creatures*. Their common principle is a belief of the existence, perfections, and providence of God, and in the doctrines of a future life, and whose rule of morals is love to God and good-will to men. Mr. John Walker, author of the *Universal Gazetteer*, published the manual of this sect, from which a few particulars shall be here extracted.

“ The Temple, the most worthy of the divinity, in the eyes of the *Theophilanthropists*, is the universe. Abandoned sometimes under the vault of heaven to the contemplation of the beauties of nature, they render its author the homage of adoration and gratitude. They nevertheless have temples erected by the hands of men, in which it is more commodious for them to assemble to listen to lessons concerning his wisdom. Certain moral inscriptions, a simple altar on which they deposit, as a sign of gratitude for the benefits of the Creator, such flowers or fruits as the seasons afford, a tribune for the lectures and discourses, form the whole of the ornaments of their temples.

The assembly sits to hear lessons or discourses on morality, principles of religion, of benevolence, and of universal salvation. These lectures and discourses are

diversified by hymns. Their assemblies are holden on the first day of the week, and on the decades." Mr Belsham, in his answer to Mr. Wilberforce, speaking of this new French sect of Deists, remarks—"Its professed principles comprehend the essence of the Christian religion; but not admitting the resurrection of Christ, the *Theophilanthropists* deprive themselves of the only solid ground on which to build the hope of a future existence."\*

---

## PAGANISM.†

UNDER the term PAGAN are comprehended those nations who worship stocks or stones, idols or false gods, in other words, the whole heathen world. The epithet itself is derived from Pagus, a village, because when Christianity became the prevalent religion under Constantine, and policy and force was employed to aid the process of conversion, the inhabitants of the capital and the principal cities, easily changed their forms of worship for the forms of the court, while the villagers retained more tenaciously the superstition of their fathers; and in consequence the ancient but now unfashionable, and of course unpro-

\* A strange assertion, as if the essence of any system of truth could remain when the foundation is destroyed.

† Paganus, a Pagan, (its primary derivation is from the Greek *παγος*, signifies a countryman, a vulgar fellow, one who would not be a soldier, and afterwards by a metalepsis came to signify one who would not fight under the standard of Christ.

fitable profession, received the contemptuous appellation of *Pagan*, or *Vulgar*; which has since been extended by European Christians to all whom they choose, in contradistinction from themselves, to call Idolaters. The regions where these dwell, are especially the dark places of the earth, the habitations of horrid cruelty, and are in a particular manner debased by crimes, which the light of the gospel, however obscured, denied, or calumniated, has banished from the other quarters of the globe.

It is doubtful whether Paganism or Idol worship existed before the flood; it is most likely it did not; but however this may be, it began not long after.—Its origin among the polished nations of antiquity, is thus marked by the pen of inspiration :—" God left not himself at any time without a witness, for the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse. Because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise they became fools; and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God, into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and<sup>s</sup> to four-footed beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves; who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen! And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them



over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient." And the same description will apply without alteration to the grossest and most stupid Paganism of the most uncultivated nations.

The most cursory view of Paganism, presents its striking features as essentially the same,—a mixture of inconsistency, absurdity, obscenity, and folly; full of idle, ill-contrived, incredible stories, alike repugnant to common sense, whether presented to us in the melifluous strains of Greece, the melodious language of Polynesia, or the barbarous uncouth tongues of South Africa, or New Holland. Were it not authenticated beyond the possibility of contradiction, it would be difficult to believe that human nature in its most degraded state could ever have worshipped the objects which Pagans have delighted to adore: yet among the wisest of the heathens, have those men been deified, who, if they had got their deserts, should have been executed. Parricides, murderers, adulterers, and thieves; nay even the vilest of brute beasts and reptiles:—Cows, cats, serpents, and crocodiles, had their altars; and sacrifices were offered to personifications of the most malignant passions of the soul, and most repulsive distempers of the body.

Nor were their opinions upon subjects connected with religion less diversified, nor less absurd, than the objects of their worship. Some held the soul to be material, and some supposed it air, or fire, or harmony, or a fifth, essence: and of the state after death, the views were equally contradictory, dark, and uncertain.

To attempt any enumeration or description of the creeds of the Pagans would be beyond the pretensions

of such a work as this; but it may not be unprofitable to mark a few of the leading traits in which they all agree, and which distinctly mark their difference from the worshippers of the true God. Some years ago, it was fashionable among the philosophers, as they called themselves, of the new school, to extol the character of the Pagan, in order to depreciate that of the Christian; and by contrasting the vilenesses and cruelties of the Roman Catholic religion, with the suppositious or imaginary virtues of the Heathen, to exalt the light of nature at the expense of the light of revelation. Disclaiming, as we do, that system of idolatry, the Popish superstition, we are not anxious to repel the attacks the French infidels have made upon it; but we do protest against any picture of uncivilized life which would tend to render Paganism amiable. The humane Hindoo, the polite Chinese, and the mild inhabitant of the South Sea Islands, lovely as they appeared in distant outline, now when we know their history thoroughly and intimately, are as debased and revolting as any of the ancient race of idolaters.

HUMAN SACRIFICES, then, are the first and the most distinguishing of the horrible atrocities of Paganism. There are some terrific facts, not perhaps sufficiently attended to, that so late as the time of Julius Cæsar, and during the Augustan age, when philosophy had done her best, and unaided reason had arrived at its highest pitch of cultivation, human beings continued among the Romans to be offered up to Demons. During the consulship of the former, two men were sacrificed in the Campus Martius by the priests of Mars; and Augustus

himself immolated four hundred victims at the altar of his uncle to propitiate his manes, A. U. 713. The Druidical religion was not less bloody. At the time of their discovery, the religion of the new world rivalled the Paganism of the old. "Religion," says Dr. Robertson, "was formed among the Mexicans into a regular system, with its complete train of priests, temples, victims, and festivals. The ancient superstition of Mexico was gloomy and atrocious; its divinities were clothed with terror, and delighted in vengeance. Of all offerings, human sacrifices were deemed the most acceptable. The manners of the people in the new world, who had made the greatest progress in the arts of policy, were the most ferocious; and the barbarity of some of their customs exceeded even those of the savage state." Montezuma, the last emperor of Mexico, it is said, offered twenty thousand human victims annually, chiefly captives taken in battle; a number, probably exaggerated by the Spaniards to extenuate their own barbarities; but whatever deduction may be made in this, still the horrid custom remains undisputed.

In the South Sea Islands, the number of human victims was immense; the chief wars carried on in Tahiti were occasioned by struggles to possess the image of their great God, Oro, with his idolatrous paraphernalia; and numerous human victims were offered up to procure his favour for the combatants. An affecting incident of this kind, which occurred during these struggles, is related in the "*Poly-nesian Researches*." A fine intelligent young man on professing Christianity, when many endeavours both by flattery and persecution made to induce him to return to

the superstition of his forefathers, had failed, was selected as the most acceptable sacrifice to the gods whom he had rejected. A Heathen ceremony was at hand ; and, on the evening of the day preceding that on which it was to take place, the young man, as his custom was, had retired to the brow of a hill that overlooked the valley where he dwelt, and there seated beneath an embowering shade, was absorbed in meditation, previous to offering up his evening supplications to his God. While thus engaged, a number of the servants of the priests and chiefs broke in upon his retirement, and told him the king had arrived, and wishing to see him, had sent them to invite him down. He knew of the approaching ceremony, that a human sacrifice was to be offered ; and he no sooner saw them advancing to his retreat, than a sudden thought, like a flash of lightning, darted across his mind, that he was to be the victim. He received it as a premonition of his doom ; and, in reply to the request, told them calmly that he did not think the king had arrived, and that, therefore, it was unnecessary for him to go down. They then told him, that the priest, or some of his friends, wished to see him, and again invited him to descend. “ Why,” said he, “ do you thus seek to deceive me ? The priest or friends may wish to see me, but it is under very different circumstances from what your message would imply. I know a ceremony approaches, that a human victim is then to be offered. Something within tells me that I am to be that victim, and your appearance and your message confirms that conviction. Jesus Christ is my keeper ; without his permission you cannot harm me : you may be

permitted to kill my body, but I am not afraid to die ! My soul you cannot hurt ; that is safe in the hands of Jesus Christ, by whom it will be kept beyond your power." Perceiving there was but little prospect of inducing him by falsehood to accompany them, they rushed upon him, murdered him where he was, and then, in a long basket, framed of the leaves of the cocoa-nut-tree, bore his body to the temple, where, with exultation, it was offered in sacrifice to their god.

Among the Bramins of India, who were once represented as the mildest of the human race, because they used no animal food, and shuddered at the idea of crushing a reptile to death, human victims are secretly murdered in their temples, and poor ignorant devotees are encouraged openly to lie down before the wheels of Juggernaut's carriage, that they may be crushed to pieces in honour of the idol.

THE SLAVERY AND DEGRADATION OF THE FEMALE SEX is another common feature of Paganism, which is discovered in all the domestic occupations and restrictions of heathen life, but chiefly in the dreadful sacrifice of wives upon the death of their husbands. In some nations of savages, they are killed at their graves, in others they are buried alive. Among the amiable Hindoos, they were wont to be burned upon the same funeral pile with their deceased tyrants. Christianity has, it is hoped, effected another glorious triumph, by banishing for ever a crime so foul from British India ; and the following illustration of the melancholy state of the poor females, it is hoped, may be numbered among the expiring

efforts of Paganism for their destruction.\* “About mid-day, November 8, 1829,” says Mr Mackintosh, “having heard of a Suttee being about to take place, and that the victim for immolation was the relict of a bunia or money changer, a kind of banker, I immediately walked to the ghaut, about two miles from my house. On my arrival there, I saw a vast crowd surrounding the intended human sacrifice. Some European military gentlemen, and a few civilians, were in the midst of the crowd, formed of thousands of natives, as close as they could adhere.

Observing that the relatives and friends of the victim were busy in piling up the wood, and spreading bushes on the top of it, I took the opportunity, to endeavour, if possible, to dissuade her from her purpose, but could not by any suggestions or arguments shake the purpose of her infatuated mind. On my telling her that, to please her cruel relations, and to exalt their family name through delusion, she was going to plunge herself into hell—for her destroying herself would be murder; and that she would do well to consider in time, and take warning. She said, whither to heaven or to hell, I must follow my lalla, [meaning her husband.] ‘Wait,’ said I, ‘till God is pleased to call you out of this world.’ She uttered one of their religious exclamations, which was immediately responded to by two of her male relations who were sitting close by her. I was told that one of them was every now and then whispering in her ear. I

\* It is taken from the Periodical Account of the Serampore Missions. A most interesting work, published at Edinburgh, under the inspection of the Rev. C. Anderson.

therefore endeavoured to shame and deter them, that they might not be guilty of exciting her to self-murder. At the desire of some European gentlemen, I went a second time to her, intreating her not to be guilty of self-murder, but to make God now the object of her affection, for that was all that was required to constitute a true suttee, [*i. e.* burnt-offering.] She said it was a request of her husband that she should burn, and that he had laid this curse upon her, that, if she did not do so, she should eat the excrement from the street." She again said, pointing to the corpse, that to her lalla she must go, and follow him. The magistrate having overheard her, told her, "When God is pleased to call you away hence by his will, then will be your proper time to go to your lalla." Well, said I, will you not hear the counsels of good men, who are painfully distressed for your intended self-murder? She said, "be glad, and see the tumash," [*i. e.* exhibition.] Shocked! I turned away from her.

During my talking to her, she said twice, that her lips were parched; and on giving notice, some water was brought by one of the relatives to moisten her mouth. Understanding she was possessed of a few hundred rupees, I went up to her again at the water's edge; having bathed herself, some of her male relations were about her, and a female was painting her face and toes with red ink as the last act. I said to them, you are doing all this to possess her riches. The dead body was carried up to the pile of wood about four feet high, quite flat on the top, where I perceived the officiating magistrate at the spot, now and then taking directions from his native of

ficers. As the widow had no children to set fire to the pile, she was desired to do it herself; as the guilt of self-murder would be on herself, and as most consistent with a true Suttee. She took a handful of straw, lighted it, and went round the pile once with astonishing boldness and agility, kindled the pile, and mounted it with the same spirit, took the head of the corpse in her lap, and sat with her back windward, in a stiff erect posture, nearly on the place she had just kindled. When the fire reached her, she threw herself prostrate, and clung to the corpse for a while apparently torpid. A shout, or cheering of praise, was given by the Hindoos; at this time I felt a great palpitation of heart, as some of us Christians had some faint hope of her escaping. We saw her in agony after a while, flinging her legs about and adjusting her clothes; and on the fire becoming very severe, she sprung up and endeavoured to get up and escape from the flaming pile. At this moment, a stupid barbarous policeman threatened her with the sword in his hand, and down she fell back on the fire with fright. The humane magistrate soon ran up to the cruel wretch, and shoved him from his post, where he had been placed only that the crowd should not come too near the pile. This enabled her to accomplish her wish, and she rushed into the river, as most natural. A charpacc or cot was brought for her by order of the magistrate, and she was put on it; and an old humane gentleman seeing she was thinly clad and wet, had a cloth belonging to her, which he perceived lying on the beach, brought, and very feelingly covered her up. She was then borne away to the jail hospital. The missionary afterwards saw her at the



hospital, and concludes his account, with a pious wish, "that she could be said, in a spiritual sense, to be a brand plucked from an infinitely greater burning, as she is, in a literal sense, under the blessing of God, through the prudent humane care of a benevolent gentleman, whose bosom must have glowed with joy on seeing a fellow-creature saved from the devouring fire, permitted to be kindled, by giving way to a monstrous superstitious and divelish religion." The number of women thus sacrificed has never been ascertained; but, in one province in Bengal alone, we have seen it estimated at fifteen hundred annually, and should hardly think it a high calculation.\*

INFANTICIDE naturally follows. Among all savage nations, motives of ease or convenience produce the murder of these helpless creatures, who require to be nourished with care, and supported by exertion; but, in this case, the infants are generally destroyed before their tender looks or plaintive cries have awakened parental sympathies in their behalf. The exposure of infants among the Greeks and Romans is well attested,

\* "This practice of sacrificing living objects to the manes of the dead, continuing in opposition to the prohibiting orders of the Indian Government, the Marquis Wellesley lately instituted an inquiry as to the probable number of these religious murders, with a view to make it, at some fitting period, the ground of some restrictive law: and his inquiries have established the horrid fact, that upwards of *thirty thousand* widows are annually burned with the bodies of their husbands; besides which, numbers of women and children are every year cast into the river as offerings to the goddess Gonza. When a woman gives birth to twins, one of the infants is generally sacrificed to this goddess, in acknowledgment for her bounty." ADAMS' *Relig. World*. Vol. I. p. 153-4.—On the 24th of November 1829, burning widows in India was prohibited by an order in Council. *Period. Account*, p. 242.

and was in some cases extended as among those they styled barbarians—to their infirm, sickly, or misshapen progeny, even when farther advanced in age. But the terrible idea of appeasing the anger of their gods, by offering to them the fruit of their bodies for the sin of their souls, although occasionally practised, never seems to have been carried the length to which other Pagans extended the crime.\* The Canaanites early made their children pass through the fire to their Idols; and it was one of those polutions for which, in the emphatic language of Scripture, their land is said to have “spewed them out.” The Carthaginians were notoriously guilty; in the number and barbarity of their infant sacrifices, they stand pre-eminent among the Pagans of antiquity; and, as they were the most commercial, that principle also, which has been supposed capable of humanizing a people, appears to be as useless as philosophy in counteracting the horrors of idolatry. In modern times, the Chinese, whose science and morals it was once fashionable to extol, are above all infamous for the destruction of their offspring. At Pekin alone, three thousand children are said to be annually exposed.† The detestable customs of the South

\* On the festival Compitalia, in the early ages of the republic, boys were said to have been sacrificed at the cross roads, to Mania, the mother of the Lares.

† The Chinese system of religion has been praised by some writers, as almost rivalling, in the sublimity of its principles and the excellence of its morality, the Christian; and represented by others, more truly, as a gross superstition, illustrated by a thousand abominable images and idolatrous rites. The French writers, La Compte and Duhald, mention a very sensible custom that prevails among the sect of Fo, which is—if the supplicants who have entreated the Gods for any favour, and presented large

Sea Islanders rendered child murder an every-day occurrence; and among those converted to Christianity, are some parents, who look back with agonizing regret upon the destruction of ten, and twelve, and fourteen of their infants by their own hands.

THE MURDER OF THE AGED, when unable to support themselves.\* This was so frequent, among some of the tribes of the American savages, that the aged, when they felt they were considered a burden to their relatives, are said to have come voluntarily, and surrendered themselves to their inevitable fate. In Greenland, before Christianity prevailed, the Moravians were witnesses to the dreadful fact; and in all these regions where food is scarce, the practice appears to have been common. But this is one practice which civilization alone seems to have been able to alleviate; and, even in some nations where infanticide was allowed—as at Sparta—old age came to be considered honourable, although probably it was only the old age of respectable citizens, for the lives of others were little accounted of.

But the most revolting feature of the Pagan is displayed in CANNIBALISM. Ancient authors bear testimony to the existence of men who banqueted upon human flesh; and St. Jerome declares, that it was a

and costly offerings to obtain their interposition, are disappointed in their expectations and receive no return, they sue them for damages; and, upon proof of the fact, obtain decrees against them from the Mandarins!—*Query*, Do the priests refund the cash?

\* During the early ages of the Romans, this cruelty seems to have been familiar; for in later times, the vestal virgins, on the ides of May, used to throw thirty figures of men, made of rushes, from the Sublician Bridge with great ceremony, instead of thirty old men who used anciently to be thrown from the same bridge into the Tiber.

practice in Britain. "I have seen," says he, "the Attacotti, a British tribe, eating human flesh. Should they find shepherds tending their herds, they are wont to cut off the fleshy part of the men, and the breasts of the women, which are esteemed the most delicious food." The Northern nations drank the blood of their enemies, and made drinking cups of their skulls; and the inhabitants of Gaul were similarly addicted.

This repulsive custom exists still upon the continent of Africa, and in the South Sea Islands, New Zealand, and New Caledonia. At the former place, the whole crew of the British ship *Boyd* was devoured in the year 1809; and at the latter, the navigators sent out in search of *La Perouse*—1793—witnessed a like horrid repast. The *Marquesans* are known to be cannibals. The inhabitants of the *Palliser*, or *Pearl Islands*, in the immediate neighbourhood of *Tahiti*, are the same. A most affecting instance of their anthropophagism is related by recent visitors, who state, that a captive female child, pining with hunger, on begging a morsel of food from the cruel and conquering invaders of her native island, was supplied with a piece of her own father's body!

"Thus," as a late writer remarks, "is the history of Paganism little else than a confirmation of the truth of the fall, or a history of human depravity; and what a picture does this present to us of human nature, unsubdued by divine grace, and of human reason unassisted by revelation? What a deep and grateful sense ought it to impress on our minds of the infinite obligations which we owe to God for the unspeakable gift of the gospel! For wherever its divine light has broken forth, this tremend-

ous demon worship has disappeared: in the Christian world, human sacrifices are abolished—cannibalism is unknown—and the land is no longer defiled with blood.” But it is a lamentable truth, of which Christians ought never to lose sight, that were the whole surface of the globe divided into thirty parts, not less than nineteen of these parts, that is, two-thirds of the whole, are still the lands of darkness and of the shadow of death, of a darkness that may be felt.

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## JUDAISM.

*Judaism* is the religious doctrines and rites of the *Jews*, who are the descendants of Abraham, a person of eminence, chosen by God, soon after the flood, to preserve the doctrine of the Divine Unity among the idolatrous nations of the earth. A complete system of Judaism is contained in the five books of *MOSES*, their great lawgiver, who was raised up to deliver them from their bondage in Egypt, and to conduct them to the possession of Canaan, the promised land. The Jewish æconomy is so much directed to *temporal* rewards and punishments, that it has been questioned whether the Jews had any knowledge of a future state. This opinion has been defended with vast erudition by Warburton, in his *Divine Legation of Moses*; but it has been controverted by Dr. Sykes, and other authors of respectability.\* The

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\* It is strange that a Christian Bishop should have started a doubt upon a subject which our Saviour himself has for ever set at rest. When the

principal sects among the Jews, in the time of our Saviour, were the *Pharisees*, who placed religion in external ceremony—the *Sadducees*, who were remarkable for their incredulity; and the *Essenes*, who were distinguished by an austere sanctity. Some account of these sects will be found in the last volume of Prideaux's *Connection*, in Harwood's *Introduction to the Study of the New Testament*, and in Marsh's improved edition of *Michaelis*. The Pharisees and Sadducees are frequently mentioned in the New Testament; and an acquaintance with their principles and practices serves to illustrate many passages in the sacred history.

At present the Jews have two sects, the *Caraites*, who admit no rule of religion but the law of Moses; and the *Rabbinists*, who add to the laws the traditions of the Talmud. The dispersion of the Jews took place upon the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus the Roman Emperor, A. D. 70. The expectation of a Messiah is the distinguishing feature of their religious system. The word MESSIAH signifies one *anointed*, or installed into an office by unction. The Jews used to anoint their kings, high priests, and sometimes prophets, at their entering upon office. Thus Saul, David, Solomon, and Joash, kings of Judah, received the royal unction. Thus also Aaron and his sons received the sacerdotal, and Elisha, the disciple of Elijah, the prophetic unction.

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Sadducees came tempting him with a question respecting the woman who had been married to seven husbands, "Jesus answered and said, ye do err, *not knowing the Scriptures*, nor the power of God." "Have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, 'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?' God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." Here the passage by which the Sadducean doctrine was refuted, was brought from the first book of Moses.

Christians believe that JESUS CHRIST is the Messiah, in whom all the Jewish prophecies are accomplished. The Jews, infatuated with the idea of a *temporal* Messiah, who is to subdue the world, still wait for his appearance. According to Buxtorf, (a professor of Hebrew, and celebrated for rabbinical learning) some of the modern rabbins believe that the Messiah is already come, but that he will not manifest himself on account of the sins of the Jews. Others, however, have had recourse to the hypothesis of two Messiahs, who are to succeed each other—one in a state of humiliation and suffering—the other in a state of glory, magnificence, and power. Be it however remembered, that in the New Testament Jesus Christ assures us in the most explicit terms that *he* is the Messiah. In John iv. 25, the Samaritan woman says to Jesus, *I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak to thee am HE.* According to the prediction of Jesus Christ, several impostors would assume the title of Messiah; and accordingly such persons have appeared. An history of "*False Messiahs*" has been written by a Dutchman. Barcohab was the first, who appeared in the time of Adrian.

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Besides this impostor, Jortin, in his Remarks on Ecclesiastical History, enumerates upwards of nineteen of one description and another, whose success was amazing, and brought upon the Jews the most enormous calamities. Their pretensions and promises were so ridiculous, that nothing but judicial infatuation could have induced any

rational being to follow them. In the time of Theodosius the younger, A. D. 434, Moses Cretensis arose. He pretended to be a second Moses, sent to deliver the Jews who dwelt in Crete, and promised to divide the sea, and give them a safe passage through it. They assembled together, with their wives and children, and followed him to a promontory. He there commanded them to cast themselves into the sea. Many of them readily obeyed him, and perished in the waters; and many were taken up and saved by fishermen. The impostor himself is supposed to have been drowned, as he was seen no more. He wrought no miracle, remarks the Doctor, unless it be supposed a sort of miracle to make a Jew throw away himself and his money too !

A. D. 1157, a false Messiah appeared in Spain, who occasioned an insurrection, and the destruction of almost all the Jews in that country. Within ten years another rose in Morrocco; after whose extinction followed one who pretended to be the forerunner of Messiahs. There was something rather extraordinary about this last, at least about the test he proposed of his divine embassy. When brought before the Arabian king, he was questioned as to his mission, and owning himself a messenger of God, was required to prove his credentials by working some miracle. "Cut off my head," said he, "and I will return to life again." The king took him at his word, and the prophet, who probably knew that he would lose his scone at any rate, had the comfort of a speedy decapitation.

One thousand six hundred and sixty-six was a year of great expectation. Multitudes from unknown parts were



said to have again congregated in the wilderness, and these were supposed to be the ten tribes, so long scattered. A ship was reported to have arrived in the north of Scotland—then as little known as the deserts of Arabia—with sails and cordage of silk, whose mariners spoke nothing but Hebrew, and on whose sails was this motto, **THE TWELVE TRIBES OF ISRAEL**. During this period of excitation among the Jews, Sabatai Levi presented himself to them as the Messias—promised them deliverance and a prosperous kingdom, and was immediately hailed as their Prince and Deliverer: with such enthusiastic credulity did some of them receive him, that they declared if he should prove an impostor, they would turn Christians.—He did prove an impostor, but they did not turn Christians.

He was the son of Mordecai Levi, an Israelite of mean rank in the city of Smyrna, but he attained great skill in Hebrew learning. He was author of a new doctrine, for which he was expelled the city. Thence he went to Salonichi, where he married a very handsome woman; being, however, divorced by her, he travelled into the Morea, then to Tripoli, Gaza, and Jerusalem. By the way he picked up a third wife. At Jerusalem he commenced reformer, and communicating his design of professing himself the Messias to one Nathan,—Nathan, delighted with the project, set up for Elias, commenced his office by abolishing all the Jewish fasts as improper, now that the Bridegroom was come: and prophesied that the Messias should stand before the Grand Signior in less than two years, to take from him his crown, and lead him in chains.

Sabatai then appeared at Gaza, where he preached repentance, together with faith in himself, so effectually, that the people gave themselves up entirely to devotion and alms. His fame quickly spread abroad, and he resolved for Smyrna—next for Constantinople. Nathan meanwhile thus addressed him from Damascus:—"To the King, our King, Lord of Lords, who gathers the dispersed of Israel, who redeems our captivity; the man elevated to the height of all sublimity, the Messiah of the God of Jacob, the true Messiah, the celestial Lion, Sabatai Levi." Full of expectation, the Jews submitted to every species of fanatical mortification, that they might not obstruct the speedy advent. Some famished themselves by long fasting, others buried themselves in the earth till their limbs grew stiff. Some would endure melting wax dropped on their flesh, others in the depth of winter rolled in snow, or sat in cold water, and many whipped themselves. Business was laid aside, all superfluous household stuff disposed of, and immense sums distributed among the poor.

At length Sabatai came to Smyrna, where he was adored by the people, and assumed the title of the only and first-born Son of God, the Messiah, the Saviour of Israel. Four hundred men and women prophesied of his growing kingdom; and young infants who could hardly speak would plainly pronounce Sabatai, Messiah, and Son of God. The people were for a time possessed, and voices heard from their bowels: some fell into trances, foamed at the mouth, recounted their future prosperity, their visions of the Lion of Judah, and the triumphs of Sabatai. All which the Jews afterwards ascribed to the delusions

of the devil ; but in the meantime they mightily inflated the pride of the impostor ; who ordered the Jews to abstain praying for the Grand Signior, his doom being sealed, and to pray for himself instead of one who was so soon to be his captive ! He then selected princes to govern the Jews in their march towards the Holy Land, and to preside over them when they should have obtained it. A miracle was now required ; and what he could not do for himself the people did for him. They imagined, when he appeared before the Cadi, that a pillar of fire interposed between that magistrate and their king ; and he who would not believe in this divine testimony to the Messias, was shunned as an excommunicated person.

Sabatai now felt himself called of God to go to Constantinople. He went in a small Turkish vessel ; but his passage was boisterous, for neither the winds nor the waves would obey him. On his arrival, the Visier requested the honour of a visit, and, unwilling to part with so exalted a guest, committed him to the tender attentions of a Turkish jailor. The Jews at Constantinople followed the example of the Jews at Smyrna, gave up their business, and prepared for Jerusalem. By way of preliminary, they resolved to preserve their cash, and therefore refused to pay their debts. The English merchants, unwilling to bear the expense of their journey, applied to Sabatai, who exercised his Messiaship by ordering their accounts to be settled. Sabatai remained prisoner at Constantinople two months, till the Grand Visier, departing for Candia, removed him to the castle at the Dardanelles. On this the Jews, who conceived that the minister's precaution proceeded from fear—the usual

mode of a Turkish visier's getting quit of a troublesome neighbour, being either to ornament the walls of the seraglio with his head, or to send his carcase to fatten the fishes of the Hellespont—flocked in great numbers to visit the place of his captivity : not only those of the east, but the strangers scattered through Poland, Germany, Leghorn, Venice, and the regions of the west, obtained Sabatai's blessing, and promises of advancement. The Turks immediately raised the price of provisions, lodgings, &c. The guards levied large sums from those who wished to gain admission ; and the confinement of Sabatai turned out a profitable concern.

The ninth day of the month Ab, had been a solemn day of fasting among the Jews ; for on that day the first temple had been burned by the Chaldeans ; on that day the sacred temple had been destroyed by the Romans ; and on that day it had been decreed in the wilderness that the rebellious generation of the Israelites should not enter Canaan ! But on that day Sabatai had been born, and he commanded it now to be made a day of joy to be celebrated with feasting, music, and illuminations, in acknowledgment of the love of God in giving them that day of consolation for the birth of their king Messias, Sabatai Levi, his servant and first-born Son, in love !

Among Sabatai's visitors was Nehemiah Cohen, a learned Rabbin, from Poland, who maintained, that, according to Scripture, there ought to be a two-fold Messias, one the son of Ephraim, a poor and despised teacher of the law ; the other the son of David, to be a conqueror. Nehemiah was content to be the former, and to leave the glory of the latter to Sabatai ; but the two

not agreeing about the boundaries of their mutual offices the son of Ephraim denounced the son of David, as a dangerous person to the Turkish government. The Grand Seignor sent for "the Conqueror," and told him that he expected a miracle. Sabatai hesitated, and the Sultan chose one for himself.—"Let the Messias," said he, "be stripped naked, and set as a mark for my archers to shoot at; if the arrows do not pierce his flesh, I also shall acknowledge his mission." The Celestial Lion declined the trial, and was then offered the choice of being forthwith impaled, or of immediately turning Mahometan. He turned Turk. The Jews insisted that he was taken to heaven, and that it was only his angel that wore the Turkish habit, but that he himself should again revisit the earth in a fit season;—the fit season has not however yet arrived.

Rabbi Mordecai, a German Jew, claimed the Messiahship, 1682. After deluding numbers of Italian Jews about Prague, he came to Germany, where he vanished. The last who set up for the dignity was Richard Brothers, about the end of the eighteenth century, who finished his career in bedlam. The English Jews rejected his pretensions; but what was more wonderful, he found followers and supporters even in the British House of Commons.—*Basnage Hist. des Juifs.*—*Jortin's Remarks on Eccl. Hist. Vol. II. p. 185, et seq.*

The *Talmud* is a collection of the doctrines and morality of the Jews. They have two works that bear this name; the first is called the Talmud of Jerusalem; and the other the Talmud of Babylon. The former is shorter and more obscure than that of Babylon, but is of an

older date. The Talmud compiled at Babylon the Jews prefer to that of Jerusalem, as it is clearer and more extensive.\* A summary of the modern Jewish creed was drawn up by Moses Maimonides, otherwise called the great *Rambam*,† an Egyptian Rabbi, of high repute, who flourished in the 11th century, which is still acknowledged as their confession of faith. It consists of thirteen articles, and distinctly affirms the authenticity and genuineness of the Books of Moses.

I. I believe, with a true and perfect faith, that God is the Creator, [whose name be blessed] governor, and maker of all creatures, and that he hath wrought all things, worketh, and shall work for ever.

II. I believe, with perfect faith, that the Creator [whose name be blessed] is one; and that such an unity as is in him can be found in no other; and that he alone hath been our God, is, and for ever shall be.

III. I believe, with a perfect faith, that the Creator [whose name be blessed] is not corporeal, not to be com-

\* This is not sufficiently explicit. The Jewish doctrines and morality are contained in the law of Moses, as written by himself; but they believe that, beside the written law as contained in the Pentateuch, God delivered to Moses an *oral* law, which was handed down by tradition. This was never committed to writing till about the beginning of the third century of the Christian æra, when Judah Hakkodesh, president of the Sanhedrim at Tiberias, arranged it in six books, which the Rabbins hold as of equal authority with the Scriptures, and call the *mishna*, i. e. Heb. *repetition*. Commentaries were written upon this, which are called *Gemara*; and both together, viz. the text and the commentary, form what they call the TALMUD. The *Targums*, which are often mentioned, are translations or expositions of the Hebrew Scriptures in the Chaldee language, made at different times, after the return from Babylon, for the use of the people.

† An abbreviation of his Hebrew name being the initials of Rabbi Moses Ben Maimon. Such abbreviations are common among the Jews.

prehended with any bodily properties : and that there is no bodily essence that can be likened unto him.

IV. I believe, with a perfect faith, the Creator [whose name be blessed] to be the first and the last ; that nothing was before him, and that he shall abide to last for ever.

V. I believe, with a perfect faith, that the Creator [whose name be blessed] is to be worshipped, and none else.

VI. I believe, with a perfect faith, that all the words of the prophets are true.

VII. I believe, with a perfect faith, that the prophecies of Moses [our master, may he rest in peace] were true ; that he was the father and chief of all wise men that lived before him, or ever shall live after him.

VIII. I believe, with a perfect faith, that all the law which in this day is found in our hands was delivered by God himself to our master, Moses—God's peace be with him.

IX. I believe, with a perfect faith, that the same law is never to be changed, nor any other to be given us of God—whose name be blessed.

X. I believe, with a perfect faith, that God [whose name be blessed] understandeth all the works and thoughts of man, as it is written in the prophets : he fashioneth their hearts alike—he understandeth all their works.

XI. I believe, with a perfect faith, that God will recompense good to them that keep his commandments, and will punish them who transgress them.

XII. I believe, with a perfect faith, that Messiah is

yet to come ; and though he retard his coming, yet I will wait for him till he come.

XIII. I believe, with a perfect faith, that the dead shall be restored to life when it shall seem fit unto God, the Creator—whose name be blessed, and memory celebrated, world without end. Amen.

The most remarkable of these articles is that in which they express their expectation of a coming Messiah, while they affirm their belief in the predictions of the prophets. Scattered and peeled as they have been now for nearly eighteen hundred years, without a prince, or without a ruler, it is difficult to conceive what they make of Jacob's dying blessing, that the sceptre should not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, till Shiloh should come. That remarkable prophecy of Daniel, " After threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself : and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary," they resolutely avert their eyes from.

The Jewish œconomy was certainly typical of the Christian dispensation in many important respects ; but these types and antitypes have been wretchedly abused. A curious instance of this kind occurred about the time of the reformation. Le Clerc has recorded it ; and the perusal of it must create a smile. The story is this : Two eminent protestants, a Lutheran and a Calvinist, had been wrangling a considerable time about the precedency of their patriarchs, without any seeming advantage ; when the one took it into his head to make Luther the *antitype* of Aaron, seeing he was the first who had set up and lighted the grand *candlestick* of the reformation, in the taber-



nacle. The other not being able to disprove the fact, had recourse to the same *typical* reasoning, and affirmed, that if Luther was Aaron's *antitype*, upon that score Calvin was much more so, since it is manifest that if he had not taken the *snuffers* in his hand and snuffed the lamps, the *candlestick* would have given so dim a light, that few people would have been the better for it ! \*

The most remarkable periods in the history of the Jews are the call of Abraham, the giving of the law by Moses, their establishment in Canaan under Joshua, the building of the temple by Solomon, the division of the tribes, their captivity in Babylon, their return under Zerubbabel, and the destruction of their city and temple by the Emperor Titus. Their books of the old Testament are the most ancient and authentic records extant. From that time to the present day, they have been without a common country—without a temple—without a sacrifice—without a prophet—without a common leader or protector, and, as was predicted respecting them, have ever been “an astonishment, a proverb, and a bye-word,” a-

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\* The typical nature of the old dispensation, is distinctly and solemnly recognised by our Saviour himself, by his forerunner and by his apostles: when the Baptist pointed out Jesus to his disciples as the Messiah, it was by an allusion to the typical sacrifices under the Jewish œconomy:—“Behold the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world.” When Jesus foretold the manner of his death, and the blessings that would follow, it was by a similar token:—“As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life.” And the epistle to the Hebrews is an explication of the Jewish œconomy upon the same principle. Any ridiculous application, therefore, which would tend to weaken our reverence for the legitimate use of the sacred symbols of the Jewish ritual, is exceedingly improper:—the one in the text smells strongly of infidel or papistical invention,—it was a pity our author admitted it.

mong all the nations whither the Lord hath scattered them. For further information respecting Judaism, many publications may be consulted. See the writings of Josephus, their famous historian, of which there are several translations in our language; *Dr. Jennings's two volumes of Jewish antiquities*, *Dr. Shaw's Philosophy of Judaism*, and *Levi's Ceremonies of the Jewish Religion*.

I shall conclude this article of the Jews with remarking, that the indefatigable Dr. Priestly addressed them some years ago with spirit; and Mr. Levi, a learned Jew, has replied. An excellent *Address to the Jews*, from the same pen, [Dr. Priestley's] dated Northumberland, America, October 1, 1799, concludes in the following pointed manner: "I formerly took the liberty to address you, and had the happiness to find you were satisfied that I wrote from the purest motives, and a sincere respect and good will to your nation. Having then advanced all that I thought necessary for the purpose, I shall not repeat it here. But I cannot help observing, that though one of your nation, a person whom I well know and respect, replied to me, he did not undertake to refute my principle argument, viz. that from *Historical Evidence*. He did not pretend to point out any defect in the arguments that I advanced, for Jesus having wrought real miracles, for his having died, and having risen from the dead. And if the gospel history of those facts be true, whatever may be objected to Christianity on other accounts, the divine mission will be unquestionable. God would never have suffered any person pretending to come from him, to impose upon your nation and the whole world in so egregious a manner as Jesus must have done,

if he had been an impostor. Would God have raised an impostor to life, after a public execution? And yet, in my discourse on that subject, I have shown that this one fact has the most convincing evidence that any fact of the kind could possibly have. If you attentively consider the character of Jesus, his great simplicity, his piety, his benevolence, and every other virtue, you must be satisfied that he was incapable of imposture. Compare his character and conduct with that of Mahomet, or any other known impostor, and this argument of the internal kind must strike you in a forcible manner. Besides, how was it possible for such a religion as the Christian, preached by persons in low stations, without the advantage of a learned education, to have established itself in the world, opposed as it was by every obstacle that could be thrown in its way, if it had not been supported by truth, and the God of truth? The unbelief of your nation in general, has answered an important purpose in the plan of Divine Providence, as nothing else could have given so much satisfaction, that Christianity received no aid from civil government, and that the books of your scriptures are genuine writings, not imposed on the world by Christians. But this great end being now completely answered by the continuance of your incredulity for such a length of time, I hope the time is approaching when, as the apostle says, Rom. xi. 26. *All Israel will be saved*; an event which will be followed by the conversion of the gentiles in general. Your restoration cannot fail to convince the world of the truth of your religion; and in those circumstances, your conversion to

Christianity cannot fail to draw after it that of the whole world!"

In the *Spectator*, No. 495, Addison has given an admirable paper on the history of the *Jews*, written with his accustomed ingenuity and piety. In it he considers the Jews, with regard to their numbers, disposition, and adherence to their religion, as having furnished every age, and every nation of the world, with the strongest arguments for the Christian faith, not only as these particulars are foretold of them, but as they themselves are the depositaries of these and all the other prophecies which tend to their own confusion. Their numbers furnish us with a sufficient cloud of witnesses that attest the truth of the Old Bible. Their dispersion spreads these witnesses through all parts of the world. Their adherence to their religion makes their testimony unquestionable. Had the whole body of Jews been converted to Christianity, we should certainly have thought all the prophecies of the Old Testament that relate to the coming and history of our blessed Saviour, forged by Christians many years after the events they pretended to foretell.



**THEIR DISPERSION.**—The greatest prodigy that can be imagined, says Basnage, is the preservation of the Jewish people in the midst of the miseries which they have undergone since seventeen hundred years. Religions depend on temporal prosperity; they triumph under the protection of a conqueror; they languish and sink, with sinking monarchies. Paganism, which once covered the Roman world, is extinct. The

Christian church glories in its martyrs, yet was considerably diminished by the persecutions to which it was exposed, nor was it easy to repair the breaches made in it by those acts of violence. But here we behold a church hated and persecuted for seventeen hundred ages, and yet sustaining itself, and widely extended. Kings have often employed the severity of edicts, and the hands of executioners to ruin it. The seditious multitudes by murders and massacres have committed outrages against it still more violent and tragical. Princes and people, Pagans, Mahometans, Christians, disagreeing in so many things, have united in the design of exterminating it, and have not been able to succeed. The *bush of Moses*, surrounded with flames, ever burns, and is never consumed. The Jews have been expelled at different times from every part of the world, which have only served to spread them in all regions. From age to age they have been exposed to misery and persecution, yet still they subsist in spite of the ignominy and hatred which hath pursued them in all places, whilst the greatest monarchies are fallen, and nothing remains of them beside the name. The judgments which God has exercised upon this people are terrible, extending to the men, the religion, and the very land in which they dwelt. The ceremonies essential to their religion can no more be observed; the ritual law which cast a splendour on the national worship, and struck the Pagans so much, that they sent their presents and their victims to Jerusalem, is absolutely fallen; for they have no temple, no altar, no sacrifice.

Their land itself seems to be under a never-ceasing curse. Pagans, Christians, Mahometans, in a word, almost all nations have by turns seized and held Jerusalem. To

the Jew only hath God refused the possession of the small tract of ground, so supremely necessary for him, since he ought to worship on this mountain. In all this there is no exaggeration ; I am only pointing out known facts, and far from having the least design to raise an odium against the nation from its miseries. I conclude it ought to be looked upon as one of those prodigies which we admire without comprehending, since, in spite of evils so durable, and a patience so long exercised, it is preserved by a particular providence. The Jew ought to be weary of expecting a Messias, who so unkindly disappoints his vain hopes, and the Christian ought to have his attention and his regard excited towards men whom God preserves for so great a length of time, under calamities which would have been the total ruin of any other people.

According to the writers of the New Testament, the Jews suffered the evils which they underwent for their disobedience and their rebellion against Christ : and as the national disobedience then continued, it was fit that the national punishment should continue also. The ceremonial law had been abolished by the gospel, and therefore it was fit the Jews should not be put in a capacity to observe it, though they were ever so willing. Thus they were under a curse, as the ancient Christian writers often remark, because they could not perform the legal expiations and atonements. The Jews might have replied, that God accepted the will for the deed ; that a contrite heart would serve instead of sacrifices ; that no man is bound to impossibilities ; and that, under the Babylonian captivity, they ceased not to be God's people, though they had neither temple nor sacrifice. But the long

cessation of the ceremonial law brought in a prescription against it, and showed that it was antiquated, and that the new and second covenant had taken place of the first. The longer the Jewish dispersion and the desolation of Jerusalem continued, the more force the Christian argument gathered. Now the argument stands thus: your forefathers, when by idolatry, sorcery, and shedding of innocent blood, and all sorts of defilements, they had provoked God beyond measure, were carried captives to Babylon; but after twenty years they returned and rebuilt their temple. Since that time you have been no more guilty of idolatry, and yet you are rejected of God these seventeen hundred years. What crimes have you committed against him worse than idolatry, or high treason, for which you are thus severely punished beyond all former example of God's dealing with you? It must be for the rejection of the Messias. While the Jews thus remain living proofs of the truth of the gospel, the question has been often agitated about

**THEIR RESTORATION.** All Christian divines are agreed upon this, that the Jews will be converted to Christianity in the latter day; and indeed the Apostle Paul is so explicit on this subject, that his language cannot admit of two interpretations: "Hath God cast away his people? God forbid! but rather through their fall, salvation is come unto the Gentiles to provoke them to jealousy." "For I would not brethren," says he, addressing the Romans, "that ye should be ignorant of this mystery,—lest ye should be wise in your own conceit—that blindness in part is happened to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in, and so all Israel shall be saved, as it is written,

‘There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.’ ” The apostle shews that God had always among them a remnant, according to the election of grace, and that though the majority were, for their rejection of Christ, severed from the good olive tree, yet that separation was only for a time, and they should again be grafted into the natural stock.

The Jews were called God’s own people, and his first-born. To them Christ was sent; to them the Apostles first preached the gospel; and the first Christian church was that of Jerusalem, which in the primitive times was as the mother church, and the only one to whom belonged in any degree the pre-eminence among the churches. In succeeding ages doubtless God has reserved to himself many of that people, though as a nation they are outcasts from his church; and the question is not, whether they shall return as a nation to him, from whom they have departed? but whether this return shall be marked by a restoration to their own land? The preservation of this people, under such long, signal, and unexampled calamities, evidently points them out as reserved for some illustrious purpose of providence; nor does it seem consistent with the design or tenor of prophecy,—if we may venture an opinion on so hazardous a subject,—that they should, by conversion in the countries in which they sojourn, be received into the church, and mingle in the general mass of Christianity, in the same manner as the Gentile nations, whose destinies have been unmarked by other than common political revolutions. Our Saviour says, “Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled;”



which warrants the belief, that after that time it shall be again raised up; and a text in Ezekiel, parallel to the passage quoted from Paul's epistle to the Romans, leads to the same conclusion: "Thus saith the Lord God, In the day that I have cleansed you from all your iniquities; I will also cause you to dwell in the cities, and the wastes shall be builded, and the desolate land shall be tilled, whereas it lay desolate in the sight of all that passed by; and they shall say, this land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden; and the waste, and desolate, and ruined cities are become fenced, and are inhabited."

Never was there a more wonderful prophecy delivered respecting any nation, than that contained in the twenty-eighth to the thirty-third chapters of Deuteronomy; the curses there pronounced for disobedience have been fearfully fulfilled to the letter; and there is no reason to suppose that the heart-cheering promises of a final restoration shall be less faithfully performed: neither is it probable that, after having been so dreadfully punished as a nation in the sight of the whole world, that they shall not in like manner be honoured as a nation before all the people of the earth. Conjectures, either as to the time or manner of their restoration, ought ever to be mentioned with diffidence; but the almost universal change of feeling which has taken place throughout Christendom, with regard to the Jews, who are now, even in Popish countries, treated with humanity, if not with kindness, bespeaks the dawn of better days. In some protestant countries efforts have been made for their conversion; the attempt is benevolent, and in the spirit of Christianity; and it is

to be hoped, in some instances, may be accompanied with success ; but there does not appear any scriptural ground to expect that the Jews, as a people, will ever acknowledge Christ, till after they have been gathered out of the countries whither they have been driven, and settled again in the land of their fathers. Were they to be converted before, they would lose their distinctive character ; but they are “ a people who are to dwell alone, and not to be reckoned among the nations.” It seems therefore probable, that they will be reinstated in Caanan as Israelites, and that their reception of the Messiah will be as their rejection of him was,—a national deed.

The Jews are to be found in every quarter of the globe ; but they are most numerous in the Turkish empire, and in Poland : about the beginning of the late war, they were calculated at one hundred thousand in France and Italy ; in Amsterdam alone, at sixty thousand ; and in London, at upwards of sixteen thousand. The whole nation has been estimated by some authors so low as two millions and a half, and by some as high as nearly seven millions.



## MAHOMETANISM.

### LIFE OF MAHOMET.

MAHOMET was born towards the end of the sixth century, about the year 570, at Mecca, in Arabia Felix.

He was descended from a chief family, and one of the most illustrious tribes ; but the death of his father left him in indigent circumstances, his sole inheritance being five camels and a female Ethiopian slave : his grandfather protected his infancy ; the care of his education was committed to Abu Taleb, his uncle, who instructed him in the business of a merchant ; and at the age of thirteen carried him with him into Syria, to attend the fairs of Bozra and Damascus. Handsome in his person, and insinuating in his manners, he gained the affection of Khadijah, a noble and rich widow, in whose service he had engaged ; and about the twenty-fifth year of his age, she gave him her hand as a reward for his fidelity, and raised him to an equality with the richest in his native city. Advanced to opulence, he assumed a new character : during fifteen years he devoted yearly the month of Ramadam to religious retirement and in the cave of Hira, three miles from Mecca, meditated the project of a new revelation. The church called Christian had now most awfully degenerated, and by the promiscuous admission within her pale, of all who would simply submit to the initiatory rite, had become an entire worldly establishment, which had exchanged the name, but scarcely the form of its idolatry. The images of saints had succeeded those of heroes, and legendary miracles fabulous exploits, while the licentiousness of the age kept pace with its ignorance and superstition. Mahomet artfully availed himself of the circumstances of the times. He sought to unite all by the simple creed of one supreme God ; but he suited his subsidiary doctrines to the grosser propensities of our nature, and al-

lured disciples by the promise of unbounded sensual gratification, not only in the present, but in the future state.

He was in his fortieth year, when he announced himself the PROPHET AND APOSTLE OF GOD, first only privately to those of his own family. At midnight, in his solitary cave—the scene of his pretended intercourse with Gabriel, the glorious messenger of the Most High,—he acquainted his wife with his great commission, and had the happiness of receiving Khadijah as his first proselyte; his slave Zeid was the next; but his cousin Ali, the young and impetuous son of Abu Taleb—an important accession—styled himself the “first of believers.” Three years elapsed ere he could number more than twelve followers; and as he had no other arms than persuasion, he encountered such ridicule and opposition, that his uncle endeavoured to persuade him, to give up what he considered a hopeless mission. “Should they set the sun against me on my right hand, and the moon on my left, I shall not quit my enterprise,” was the intrepid reply of the impostor.

His unshaken perseverance and consummate policy, at length collected a considerable number of adherents; yet in the fifth year of his mission, the opposition of the Koreish, his own, but hostile tribe, occasioned his first flight. His ingenuity effected a reconciliation, and he returned to his native city, where, in the twelfth year of his mission, he revealed his famous night journey from Mecca to Jerusalem, and from Jerusalem to Heaven. The ridiculous fiction shocked even his followers; and had not Abu Becr, a chief man among the Koreish, declared his

implicit faith in the fable, its extravagance had probably ruined the whole. Its incomprehensible absurdity produced an opposite effect; for he who believed in the journey could doubt no more. The last desperate effort of his enemies occasioned his second flight\* the same year; but he found a secure retreat in Medina, where the number of his retainers increased so much, that he obtained permission from God to attack the Infidels, destroy Idolatry, and propagate the true faith at the point of the sword.

From this period his affairs went on prosperously; he was not only able to defend himself against the assaults of his enemies, but to attack them; and the battle of Bedr, which he gained within two years, decided his superiority. Acknowledged as a conqueror, his success inflamed his ambition, and he now proposed propagating Islamism beyond the narrow bounds of Arabia. The neighbouring princes were invited to become proselytes. Khosru, king of Persia, received his message with disdain, tore his epistle in pieces, and ordered Badhan, the tributary king of Taman, to send him the impostor. Mahomet announced the vengeance of heaven against the Infidel, "God shall tear his kingdom;" and when Bad-

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\* This flight, termed the Hegira, forms the Mahometan æra, and corresponds with the year of our Lord 622. A remarkable, but apparently trifling incident, changed, on this occasion, the face of the world. Mahomet, with only two attendants, took refuge from his pursuers, who sought to kill him, in a cave where he lay hid three days. While the infidels approached, and were about to enter his asylum, a bird flew out, and one of them observing a spider's web across the passage, they did not enter, naturally supposing, from these appearances, that the cave could contain no human inhabitant.

han's messenger arrived, told him that he had had it revealed, that Khosru was slain by his son Shiruyeh; that his religion and empire would soon more than rival the kingdom of Khosru, and advised him to exhort his master to embrace the faith of Islam. Within a few days Shiruyeh informed his vassal that his father was dead, and ordered him to give the prophet no farther trouble: Badhan and the Persians became Mahomitans. The king of Ethiopia was circumcised; the governor of Egypt sent presents to the Prophet; and the Emperor Heraclius received his invitation with respect, and dismissed his ambassador with honour. Before the eleventh year of the Hegira, his religion was established, and the foundations of a vast empire laid, when the curiosity or jealousy of one of his female favourites, finished the earthly career of the prophet, whose divine inflation failed in enabling him to detect the lurking poison: he died at Medina, A. D. 631.

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MAHOMETANISM is the religion of Mahomet. His system is a compound of Paganism, Judaism, and Christianity; and the Alcorn, which is their Bible, is held in great reverence. It is replete with absurd representations, and is supposed to be written by a Jew. The most eloquent passage is allowed to be the following, where God is introduced, bidding the waters of the deluge to cease: "Earth swallow up the waters; heaven draw up those thou hast poured out: immediately the waters retreated, the command of God was obeyed, the ark rested on the mountains, and these words were heard—*woe to the wicked!*" Lust, ambition, and cruelty, have been deem-

ed the most prominent traits in Mahomet's conduct ; and Voltaire has written a fine tragedy on this subject.\* The great doctrine of the Alcoran is *the unity of God* ; and the prophet propagated his religion by force of arms. Dean Prideaux hath largely proved, in his Letter to the Deists of the present age, that there are seven marks of an imposture, and that these all belong to Mahometanism, and that not one of them can be charged on Christianity.

See *Salé's Alcoran*, *Prideaux's Life of Mahomet*, *Dr. White's Sermons at the Bampton Lecture*, and *Dr. Toulmin's Dissertations on the internal Evidence of Christianity*, and *On the Character of Christ compared with that of other founders of religion or philosophy*.

Mr. Gibbon in his Roman History, gives the following curious specimen of Mahometan divinity :—" The sword (saith Mahomet) is the key of heaven and of hell ; a drop of blood shed in the cause of God, or a night spent in arms, is of more avail than two months of fasting or prayer. Whosoever falls in battle, his sins are forgiven at the day of judgment ; his wounds shall be re-

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\* The impostor limited his followers to the number of four wives, while he himself, according to Abu 'l Feda had no less than fifteen, besides concubines. But this, it seems, was a peculiar privilege, founded on the express words of God himself : " O Prophet, we have allowed thee thy wives unto whom thou hast given their dower, and also the slaves which thy right hand possesseth of the booty which God hath granted thee, and the daughters of thy uncle, and the daughters of thy aunts, both on thy father's side and thy mother's side, who have fled with thee from Mecca ; and any other believing woman, if she give herself unto the Prophet, in case the Prophet desireth to take her to wife. This is a peculiar privilege granted unto thee above the rest of the true believers." *Salé's Koran*, quoted in *Adam's Religious World*, vol. i, p. 250, 1.

splendent as vermillion, and odoriferous as musk; the loss of his limbs shall be supplied by the wings of angels and cherubims."

"I never wondered (says an ingenious author) that the attempts of Mahomet to establish his religion were crowned with success. When I peruse the Koran, and examine the materials of which it is composed; when I observe how much the work is indebted to the Jewish and Christian revelations; when I survey the particular part which Mahomet or his agents supplied; when I see with how much art the whole is accommodated to the opinions and habits of the Jews, Christians, and Pagans; when I consider what indulgencies it grants, and what future scenes it unfolds; when I advert to the peculiar circumstances of the times, when its author formed the vast design of assuming the royal and prophetic characters; and more than all, when I contemplate the reformer at the head of a conquering army, the Koran in one hand, and in the other a sword, I cannot be surprised at the civil and religious revolution, which has immortalized his name. With *his* advantages, how could he fail of success? Every thing favoured the enterprise. The nations beheld a military apostle. And they who were unconvinced by his arguments, trembled at his sword."

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Mahomet himself disclaimed the power of working miracles, and when the people demanded this evidence of the validity of his mission, he extolled the merit of implicit faith, and the distinguishing providence of God, who would not gratify Infidels with any new displays of his power, seeing, in the case of Moses and Jesus Christ,



they had only aggravated the guilt of their unbelief; but he appealed to the internal evidence of the *Koran*, which is allowed to be elegantly written, in the purest Arabic, and asked how he, an illiterate man, could have composed so wonderful a work, without the immediate inspiration of God? This argument, which was considered unanswerable by the Arab believer, has been answered by some Christian writers, who assert that the language of the Prophet was polished, and his invention aided by the labours of a Jewish Rabbi of Persia, *Abdia ben Salon*, and an apostate Nestorian monk, *Sergius*, or *Bahira*. The early education of Mahomet precludes the idea of barbarism; and his faithful management of a large commercial concern in a city not devoid of letters, is sufficient to excite a suspicion that he was acquainted with other literature beside that which he had acquired from "the Book of Nature and of Man."\* "But that his ignorance was affected rather than real," says Mr Adam, "might have been inferred from proofs more direct and positive: for, notwithstanding all his care and circumspection, the mask sometimes dropped off, and discovered at once his real character, and the falsehood of his pretences. Even by the confession of his own historians, there were moments in which his pretended ignorance was forgotten; and he not only expressed a desire to exercise, but actually practised that very art of which he solemnly and repeatedly professed himself to be totally ignorant."† Evidently compiled as the *Koran* is from

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\* Gibbon.

† *Relig. World Displayed*, Vol. I. p. 255.—*Abu 'l Feda*, p. 156, quoted there.

the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, which it has debased and polluted, interspersed with the wildest fancies of the roving Arabian, and the enthusiastic reveries of the early Heretics—"this system," as the same writer remarks, "has, notwithstanding, this striking peculiarity, that it bears witness to the truth while it propagates a lie. Though founded itself on imposture, it does not charge with imposture either Judaism or Christianity, but recognises both as true, and affects to reverence the authority of Moses and of Christ."

The delusion of the false Prophet spread with fearful rapidity over those countries, where once the light of the Gospel had shone in its purest lustre; and the Apostate churches, which had neglected the warning voice of their Lord, and "did not remember from whence they had fallen, nor repented, nor did their first works," were made monuments of God's righteous judgment, and had their candlesticks quickly removed out of their place. Ere half a century elapsed, the victorious successors of Mahomet over-run Judea, Syria, Lesser Asia, Persia, and Armenia; and, before the end of the century, Egypt, Greece, and the islands of the Mediterranean, acknowledged their sway: they came with the Koran and the sword; their conditions were conversion or tribute; if they chose the first, they were admitted to all the privileges of Moslems; if the latter, their lives were imbittered by every species of insult and oppression; degraded, plundered, and abused, till life itself became a burden. Their appearance and progress are pointed out in the Apocalyptic vision, in language which approaches nearly to the precision of historical narrative:—"And the

angel opened the bottomless pit ; and there arose a smoke out of the pit as the smoke of a great furnace : and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit. And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth ; and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power ; and it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree, but only those men that have not the seal of God on their foreheads ; and to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months : and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion when he striketh a man ; and in those days men shall seek death, and shall not find it ; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them." A more striking commentary on this passage will not easily be found, than in the orders issued by the caliphs to their military missionaries :—" When you fight the battles of the Lord, acquit yourselves like men, without turning your backs : but let not your victory be stained with the blood of women or children. Destroy no palm-trees, nor burn any fields of corn ; cut down no fruit trees, nor do any mischief to cattle, only such as you kill to eat. When you make any articles or covenant, stand to it, and be as good as your word. As you go on, you will find some religious persons who live retired in monasteries, and propose to themselves to serve God that way ; let them alone, neither kill them, nor destroy their monasteries : and you will find another sort of people that belong to the synagogue of Satan, who have shaven crowns, be

sure you cleave their skulls, and give them no quarter till they turn Mahometans, or pay tribute.”

This proclamation, taken in connection with the history of that period, evinces the exact fulfilment of the prophecy uttered upwards of five hundred years before. The conquests of the Mahometans extended even to the continent of Europe. Spain and Portugal, were reduced by them; their career was checked in France, A. D. 726, but their dominions continued to increase till, in 1453, they entirely subverted the Eastern empire, and became masters of the capital. The Grecian and Asiatic Christians have groaned under their iron yoke from the seventh century to the present time, suffering for their idolatry and abuse of the Gospel; yet it is to be hoped that the day of their deliverance draweth nigh: the waters of Euphrates are beginning to be dried up, and the unwieldy fabric of Moslem power now totters to its base.

The number of Mahometans has been guessed at one hundred and forty million; and, from the extent of space they cover, it is more likely to be under, than over the truth.

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## CHRISTIANITY.

CHRISTIANITY, (to which Judaism was introductory) is the last and more perfect dispensation of revealed religion with which God hath favoured the human race. It was

instituted by JESUS CHRIST, *the Son of God*, who made his appearance in Judea near two thousand years ago. He was born at Bethlehem, brought up at Nazareth, and crucified at Jerusalem. His lineage, birth, life, death, and sufferings, were minutely predicted by a succession of the Jewish prophets, and his religion is now spread over a considerable portion of the globe. The evidences of the Christian religion are comprised under historical testimony, prophecies, miracles, the internal evidence of its doctrines and precepts, and the rapidity of its first propagation among the Jews and the Gentiles.—Though thinking men have in every age differed widely respecting some of the doctrines of this religion, yet they are fully agreed in the divinity of its origin, and in the benevolence of its tendency.

Brief representations of the Christian religion shall be transcribed both from the writings of Churchmen and Dissenters, well deserving of attention.

Bishop Gibson, in his second Pastoral Letter, observes—"It will appear that the several denominations of Christians agree both in the *substance of religion* and in the necessary *enforcements* of the *practice* of it: that the world and all things in it were created by God, and are under the direction and government of his all-powerful hand and all-seeing eye; that there is an essential difference between good and evil, virtue and vice; that there will be a state of future rewards and punishments, according to our behaviour in this life; that Christ was a teacher sent from God, and that his apostles were divinely inspired; that all Christians are bound to *declare* and *profess* themselves to be his disciples; that not only

the exercise of the several virtues, but also a belief in Christ is necessary, in order to their obtaining the pardon of sin, the favour of God, and eternal life ; that the worship of God is to be performed chiefly by the heart in prayers, praises, and thanksgivings ; and as to all other points, that they are bound to live by the rules which Christ and his apostles have left them in the holy Scriptures. Here then is a fixed, certain, and uniform rule of faith and practice, *containing all the most necessary points of religion, established by a divine sanction, embraced as such by all denominations of Christians, and in itself abundantly sufficient to preserve the knowledge and practice of religion in the world."*

Dr. Sherlock (who succeeded Dr. Gibson as Bishop of London) expresses himself much to the same purpose in the first volume of his Sermons. Observing that the books of the New Testament may be considered either as historical, as doctrinal, or as controversial, and some as a mixture of the two last, he thus proceeds :—" By the doctrinal I understand those matters of faith and rules of duty which do not regard this or that particular faith, but were intended for the use of the world, and are to continue to the end of it. And if there be a clear law, and clearly expressed in the world, this is the law. Can words more clearly express the honour and worship we are to pay to God, or can more familiar expressions be given in this case than are to be found in the gospel ? Is not Idolatry clearly condemned in the gospel ? Is there any thing relating to divine worship that we yet want instructing in ? Are not the duties likewise which we owe to each other made evident and plain ; and can

there be any dispute about them, except what arises from lust, or avarice, or other self-interest? As to the peculiar benefits of the gospel, are they not declared without obscurity? Can you read the gospel, and doubt whether Christ died for you? Whether God will grant pardon to the penitent, or his assistance to those who ask it, whether he will reward all such in glory who continue the faithful disciples of his Son? What *other revelation* do we *want* or can we *desire*, in these *great* and *weighty* concerns; or what is there *wanting* to make up a *complete* system of religion?"

The immortal Locke also observes—"Whoever would attain to a true knowledge of the Christian religion, in the full and just extent of it, let him study the Holy Scriptures, especially the *New Testament*, wherein are contained the words of eternal life. It has God for its author, Salvation for its end, and Truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter." Even Rousseau, confessed himself struck with the majesty of the Scriptures, the purity of the gospel, and the character of Jesus Christ. See *Gerard's Dissertations on the Internal Evidence of Christianity*, and also *Dr. Craig's Life of Christ*.

Many of the serious friends of Christianity are alarmed at the progress of Atheism and Deism, both at home and abroad. But let not the friends of truth be discouraged. That *revealed* (as well as natural) religion is encumbered with difficulties, has never been denied; and this with a considerate mind will be construed into a presumptive proof of its authenticity and excellence. "It would be a miracle (says Dr. Watson, the late Bishop of Landaff) greater than any we are instructed to believe,

if there remained no difficulties ; if a being with but five scanty inlets of knowledge, separated but yesterday from his mother earth, and to-day sinking again into her bosom, could fathom the depths of the wisdom and knowledge of *Him which is, which was, and which is to come—the Lord God Almighty, to whom be glory and dominion for ever and ever !* We live in a dissolute but enlightened age ; the restraints of our religion are ill suited to the profligacy of our manners ; and men are soon induced to believe that system to be false which they wish to find so : that knowledge, moreover, which spurns with contempt the illusions of fanaticism, and the tyranny of superstition, is often unhappily misemployed in magnifying every little difficulty attending the proof of the truth of Christianity, into an irrefragable argument of its falsehood. The Christian religion has nothing to apprehend from the strictest investigation of the most learned of its adversaries ; it suffers only from the misconceptions of sciolists and silly pretenders to superior wisdom : a little learning is far more dangerous to the faith of those who possess it than ignorance itself. Some I know affect to believe, that as the restoration of letters was ruinous to the Romish religion, so the further cultivation of them will be subversive of Christianity itself : of this there is no danger. It may be subversive of the reliques of the church of Rome, by which other churches are still polluted ; of persecutions, of anathemas, of ecclesiastical domination over God's heritage, of all the silly out-works which the pride, the superstition, and the knavery of mankind have erected around the citadel of our faith ; but the citadel itself is founded on a rock, the gates of



hell cannot prevail against it—its master-builder is God; its beauty will be found ineffable, and its strength impregnable, when it shall be freed from the frippery of human ornaments, and cleared from the rubbish of human bulwarks.”\*

The excellent Dr. Doddridge also thus happily expresses himself on the subject:—‘The cause of Christianity has greatly gained by debate, and the gospel comes like *fine gold out of the furnace*, which the more it is tried the more it is approved. I own the defenders of the gospel have appeared with very different degrees of ability for the work, nor could it be otherwise amongst such numbers of them; but on the whole, though the patrons of infidelity have been masters of some wit, humour, and address, as well as of a moderate share of learning, and generally of a much more than a moderate share of assurance, yet so great is the force of *truth*, that, (unless we may except those writers, who have unhappily called for the aid of the civil magistrate in the controversy) I cannot recollect that I have seen any defence of the gospel, which has not on the whole been sufficient to establish it, notwithstanding all the sophistical arguments of its most subtle antagonists. This is an observation which is continually gaining new strength, as *new assaults* are made upon the gospel. And I cannot forbear saying, that as if it were by a kind of *judicial infatuation*, some who have distinguished themselves in the wretched cause of infidelity, have been permitted to fall into such gross

\* This prelate published likewise two *Sermons* in defence of *Revealed Religion*, together with a *Charge*, well worthy of perusal.

misrepresentations, such senseless inconsistencies, and such palpable falsehoods, and in a word, into such various and malignant *superfluity of naughtiness*, that to a wise and pious mind, they must appear like those *venomous creatures* which are said to carry an antidote in their bowels against their own poison. A virtuous and well bred Deist must turn away from some pieces of this kind with scorn and abhorrence, and a Christian might almost be tempted to wish that the *books*, with all their scandals about them, might be transmitted to posterity, lest when they come to live, like the writings of some of the ancient heathens, only in those of their learned and pious answerers, it should hardly be credited that ever the *enemies* of the gospel in such an enlightened age, should be capable of so much impiety and folly."

From this paragraph, it would seemingly appear that good Dr. Doddridge had, with a kind of prophetic sagacity, anticipated the publication of the *Age of Reason*, which by its boldness excited alarm; but which, on account of its misrepresentations and scurrility, may be ranked among the lowest of the deistical productions.

Finally, to use the words of the ingenious Mr. Clarke, in his answer to the question, *Why are you a Christian?*—  
 "Not because I was born in a Christian country, and educated in Christian principles; not because I find the illustrious Bacon, Boyle, Locke, Clark, and Newton among the professors and defenders of Christianity; nor merely because the system itself is so admirably calculated to mend and exalt human nature, but because the *evidence* accompanying the gospel has convinced me of

its truth. The secondary causes assigned by unbelievers do not, in my judgment, account for the rise, progress, and early triumphs of the Christian religion. Upon the principles of scepticism, I perceive an effect without an adequate cause. I therefore stand acquitted to my own reason, though I continue to believe and profess the religion of Jesus Christ. Arguing from effects to causes, I think I have philosophy on my side. And reduced to a choice of difficulties, I encounter not so many in admitting the miracles ascribed to the Saviour, as in the arbitrary suppositions and conjectures of his enemies.

That there once existed such a person as Jesus Christ ; that he appeared in Judea in the reign of Tiberius ; that he taught a system of morals superior to any inculcated in the Jewish schools ; that he was crucified at Jerusalem ; and that Pontius Pilate was the Roman governor, by whose sentence he was condemned and executed, are *facts* which no one can reasonably call in question. The most inveterate Deists admit them without difficulty. And, indeed, to dispute these facts, would be giving the lie to all history. As well might we deny the existence of Cicero as of a person by the name of Jesus Christ. And with equal propriety might we call in question the orations of the former as the discourses of the latter. We are morally certain that the one entertained the Romans with his eloquence, and that the other enlightened the Jews with his wisdom. But it is unnecessary to labour these points, because they are generally conceded. They who affect to despise the Evangelists and Apostles, profess to reverence Tacitus, Suetonius, and Pliny. And these eminent Romans bear testimony to

several particulars which relate to the person of Jesus Christ, his influence as the founder of a sect, and his crucifixion. From a deference to human authority, all therefore acknowledge that the Christian religion derived its name from Jesus Christ. And many are so just to its merits, as to admit that he taught better than Confucius, and practised better than Socrates or Plato. But I confess my creed embraces many more articles. I believe that Jesus Christ was not only a teacher of virtue, but that he had a *special commission* to teach. I believe that his doctrines are not the works of human reason, but of divine communication to mankind. I believe that he was authorised by God to proclaim forgiveness to the penitent, and to reveal a state of immortal glory and blessedness to those who fear God and work righteousness. I believe, in short, the whole Evangelical history, and of consequence the *divine original* of Christianity, and the sacred authority of the gospel. Others may reject these things as the fictions of humour, art, or policy; but I assent to them from a full conviction of their truth. The objections of infidelity have often shocked my feelings, but have never yet shaken my faith.

To come then to the question—WHY ARE YOU A CHRISTIAN? I answer, because the CHRISTIAN RELIGION carries with it internal marks of its truth; because not only without the aid, but in opposition to the civil authority, in opposition to the wit, the argument, and insolence of its enemies, it made its way, and gained an establishment in the world; because it exhibited the accomplishment of some prophecies, and presents others, which have been since fulfilled; and because its author

displayed an example, and performed works, which bespeak not merely a superior, but a divine character. Upon these several *facts*, I ground my belief as a CHRISTIAN. And till the *evidence* on which they rest, can be invalidated by counter-evidence, I *must* retain my principles and my profession."

These extracts from *Sherlock*, *Gibson*, *Locke*, *Watson*, *Doddridge*, and *Clarke* have been here selected, because they serve to illustrate in a few words both the nature and evidences of Christianity. "Thus," says an ingenious writer, the Reverend Robert Hall of Cambridge—"When at the distance of more than half a century, Christianity was assaulted by a Woolston, a Tindal, and a Morgan, it was ably supported both by clergymen of the established church and writers amongst Protestant Dissenters; the labours of a *Clarke* and a *Butler* were associated with those of a *Doddridge*, a *Leland*, and a *Lardner*, with such equal reputation and success, as to make it evident that the *intrinsic excellence* of religion needs not the aid of external appendages, that with or without a dowry her charms are of equal force to fix and engage the heart."

It would, however, be as useless as it is impossible, to refer the reader to *all* the principal treatises which have been written at different periods for the defence and illustration of the Christian religion. But a few ought to be mentioned in justice to the subject; and those alones hall be specified which are easiest of access. The student may therefore consult *Lardner's Credibility*, *Watson's Theological Tracts*, *Butler's Analogy*, and *Paley's admirable View of the Evidences of Christianity*.

For the use of private Christians, *Doddridge's Three Sermons on the Evidences of the Christian Religion*, are warmly recommended; also an incomparable little piece written by Dr. Samuel Chandler, entitled, *Plain Reasons for being a Christian*, and an answer to the question, *Why are you a Christian*, by the late Rev. John Clarke, of Boston, in America, from which an extract has been given. This admirable compendium has been reprinted in this country.

In this age of infidelity and of dissipation, the minds of the young should be sacredly guarded against the errors and vices of the times. And solemnly doth it concern both ministers and parents, as they are accountable at the tribunal of Heaven, to furnish the RISING GENERATION with *religious* principles, which, by operating on the springs of human conduct, will ensure their temporal and their eternal felicity.



Before proceeding to consider the different denominations, it will be proper to give a brief but connected outline of Christianity itself, as exhibited in the Scriptures, without reference to any sectarian creed or commentary, particularly as regards its Essential and Distinguishing Doctrines, its Moral Precepts, and the Natural Dependence of the one upon the other;—a View of the Evidences and the Advantages of our Religion; of the Form of Church Government in Primitive Ages; and a few short Historical Notices of its Progress.

## ITS DISTINGUISHING DOCTRINES.

SOME attempt to separate the Old and New Testament, as if they contained two different religions, instead of two dispensations of the same scheme of redemption. But the fundamental doctrines of both are one; they both illustrate the character of God, as “the Lord, the Lord God merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin; and that will by no means clear the guilty:” and unfold the progressive accomplishment of the first grand promise of God to man, that the seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent; the only difference is, that the Old gives but a prospective and darker view of a coming Saviour, through the medium of types and ceremonies, and the sublime but dim visions of the Prophets—while the New presents us with the bright records of an accomplished salvation, in the simple narratives of the Evangelists, illustrated and explained by the writings of the Apostles.

THE ETERNAL EXISTENCE AND ATTRIBUTES OF GOD: his omnipresence and invisibility, his infinite power, wisdom, and goodness; his holiness, justice, and truth, were expressly revealed to the Jews, and are implicitly received by the Christians. In this indivisible essence are recognised three distinct substances, yet distinguished in such a manner as not to be incompatible with essential unity or simplicity of being—a doctrine intimated in the Mosaic account of the creation, where the

Creator uses the plural expression, “let us make man,” but more clearly declared in the commission of Christ to his disciples, “Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”

THE FALL OF MAN, AND THE ENTIRE CORRUPTION OF HUMAN NATURE, as asserted in the Old Testament, is unequivocally recognised in the New:—“By one man sin entered into the world:” and, “both Jews and Gentiles, they are all under sin.” The history of the Pagans, of the Jews, and of the nations called Christian, demonstrates the fact; and the individual experience of every human being will bear evidence that love to God and to holiness—disinterested love to our neighbour, and a desire to promote his prosperity equally with our own, are not now the natural predominant affections of the heart. Who will dare charge God with having created man with a propensity to sin? yet is it not clear as noon-day that such a propensity does exist; how then is it to be accounted for? “God made man upright, but they sought out many inventions;” by listening to the suggestions of Satan, they broke the commandment of the Lord, and lost his image; their nature became depraved, and ever since inclined to that which is evil, and backward to that which is good; their understanding became darkened, and their affections estranged from HIM, the source of all happiness.

HIS RECOVERY AND RESTORATION TO THE FAVOUR OF GOD.—But the distinguishing feature of the religion of the Bible, and that which marks its essential difference from all other systems which go under the name of re-



ligion is, that it proposes a way by which the attributes of God may harmonize in pardoning the transgressor, and by which, in restoring him to his favour, it restores him to his image ; a way by which mercy and truth may meet together, righteousness and peace may kiss each other, truth spring out of the earth, and righteousness look down from heaven. To accomplish this *an atonement* was necessary, to satisfy the demands of justice, and assert the honour of the divine law.

THE DOCTRINE OF SUCH AN ATONEMENT, as the foundation of the sinner's hope, and the chief corner stone in the temple of mercy, forms the peculiar glory of Christianity. Sin subjected man to the penalty of death. His inability to deliver himself—and his deliverance by substitution, is intimated by all the sacrifices of the old dispensation ; more plainly declared in Job, and in the Psalms :—“ His soul draweth near unto the grave, and his life to the destroyers. If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to shew unto man his uprightness : then he is gracious unto him, and saith—‘ Deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom.’ ”—“ None can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him ;” “ but God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave : ”—And marked in language that cannot be mistaken, by the prophet Isaiah :—“ All we like sheep have gone astray ; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.” The New Testament Scriptures proclaim free unmerited mercy through an atonement :—“ God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but

have everlasting life.”—“ God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.”—“ The wages of sin is death, but the *gift of God* is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

THE INFLUENCE OF THE SPIRIT in applying this doctrine is the next essential point. Had Christ by his death purchased only pardon, he had not conferred happiness. A rebel may be pardoned; but if compelled to live under the government of a sovereign he hates, and to pay a feigned submission to laws that he abhors, he could never be happy; while a traitor in heart, the very favours he received would render him miserable. It was therefore promised by the mouth of Moses:—“ The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live;” and earnestly prayed for by David:—“ Create in me a clean heart, O God: and renew a right spirit within me.” Jesus announced, with the solemn repeated asseveration, Verily! verily! his declaration, “ Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God;” but he also said, “ Ask and it shall be given you, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you;” with this additional encouragement, “ If ye being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him;” and, before he departed from his disciples, he promised that he would send from the Father the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, to teach them all things, and guide them into all truth.

Renewed by this Spirit, men become the willing subjects of the Redeemer, and, acting from a principle of love, find his yoke easy, and his burden light; they account his service perfect freedom; the joy of the Lord is their strength; they delight to do his will, they run in the way of his commandments; the love of Christ constraineth them; for they thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they which live should<sup>1</sup> not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them, and rose again. From the love thus produced proceeds all acceptable obedience; it is the mark of Christian morality, as Christian morality is the test of genuine love—"If ye love me, keep my commandments."

CHRISTIAN MORALS are consequences, not causes—they are the good fruit of a good tree—and, therefore, the propriety of the Saviour's remarks, which many who plead strenuously for the excellence of the morals he taught are apt to overlook, "Either make the tree good and his fruit good, or else make the tree corrupt and his fruit corrupt." Christian morality is thus beautifully summed up by the Apostle of the Gentiles:—"Render therefore to all their dues, tribute to whom tribute, custom to whom custom, honour to whom honour. Owe no man any thing, but to love one another; for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law: For this, thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not bear false witness, thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no

ill to his neighbour : therefore love is the fulfilling of the law."

Being restored to the favour of God by the blood of the atonement, and created anew in Christ Jesus unto good works, believers are sealed by the Holy Spirit of God unto the day of redemption ; they are set upon a rock, and their way is established ; they are enabled to be sober, and watch unto prayer ; and this spirit of watchfulness, dependence, and prayer, is kept alive in their hearts by the grace of God, through faith in the awful unseen realities of eternity ; they remember " that the end of all things is at hand."

REWARDS AND PUNISHMENTS.—Having revealed to man his lost estate, and the means of his recovery, Christianity presents before his view the consummation of all things, in the final award of those who receive or reject the gospel : and that there may be no cavil, man is to be judged according to his works—the fate of the tree will depend upon the fruit. Be not deceived—God is not mocked ; whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap ; for he that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption ; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting ! And this award shall never be recalled ; the same faithfulness and truth that stand pledged for the eternal security of the never-ending happiness of the righteous, are awfully engaged for the final irrevocable unmitigated duration of misery to the wicked—" And these shall go away into everlasting punishment ; but the righteous into life eternal,"

## EVIDENCES.

THESE are external and internal. The EXTERNAL authenticate the facts narrated respecting the personal history of the founder, and the progress of his religion. This is done by proving that the original record of these facts is a genuine document, written by the persons to whom it is ascribed : and that this document is in its principal contents corroborated by undoubted witnesses. Macknight, in his *Credibility of the Gospel History*, and Lardner, have fully exhibited and amply elucidated this branch of evidence, which Paley has summed up and concentrated with great elegance and perspicuity in his popular and well known work. It may here be sufficient to observe, that no production of antiquity has been attested with such an overwhelming and indisputable mass of testimony, and that no other rational account, than that contained in the New Testament, has ever been given of the origin and spread of a religion which has superseded Judaism, and overturned the whole system of Paganism in Europe.

THE INTERNAL are those contained in the record itself, which carry conviction to the mind in its perusal, that it is no legend, but a faithful transcript of real veritable authority. Such are the consistancy of the several parts of the Scriptures with each other, the purity and perfection of the doctrines they contain, and their agreement with the moral attributes and perfections of the Deity, their suitableness to the present state of man, and their

tendency to promote the good of society, and advance the present as well as future happiness of the human race.\* Soame Jenyns, Porteus in his Essay on the Beneficial Effects of Christianity, and Paley, have illustrated this other branch.

The evidence arising from MIRACLES rests upon the truth of the narration respecting them, and therefore

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\* These writings contain various and numerous incidents of time, place, persons, names, and things: occasional discourses, differences of style, epistles in answer to epistles, and passages cited from those which they answer, directions and observations suited to the state of several churches, seeming contradictions and real difficulties which might easily have been avoided, things mentioned which worldly considerations would have suppressed, and things omitted which invention and imagination might have supplied. A character of Christ, arising from his words and actions, of a most singular kind, left to its intrinsic merit, and aided by no art: and, in the writings of St. Paul, sentiments, warm, pathetic, and coming from the heart: particularities in each gospel suitable to the character, situation, and circumstances of each Evangelist.

There is not one page in the New Testament which affords not internal characters of being composed by men who lived at the time when the things happened which are there related. The discourses of Christ are always occasional, and full of allusions to particular incidents. The historical parts of the New Testament, and the travels of Christ and his Apostles, correspond with the accounts and descriptions which may be collected from other authors. In the judgment which Pilate passed upon Christ, the rules of the Roman law was observed. What is accidentally mentioned concerning the behaviour of Felix and Galleo, and some others, agree with the character Roman writers have given of them. There are endless particularities of this kind which might be produced.

A man of very ordinary abilities, who relates various things of which he has been an ear and an eye witness, is under no difficulty or pain; but a forger, if he had the abilities of an angel, whose imagination must supply him with materials, can never write in such a manner, and, if he has tolerable sense, will avoid entering into such minute details in which he must perpetually expose his ignorance and his dishonesty.—*Jortin's Remarks on Ecclesiastical History*, vol. I. p. 49-50.

ranges under the external proofs;\* but there is another which is insulated, yet of itself is of superior force—

THE EVIDENCE OF PROPHECY.—Moses gives a test by which the validity of such an evidence may be tried :—  
 “ And if ye shall say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the Lord hath not spoken? When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken.” *The authenticity of Christ’s predictions* was put to this test, and vindicated by their accomplishment—particularly those respecting the total destruction of the city and temple of Jerusalem—the coming of false Christs, and false prophets, magicians, and sorcer-

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\* The Christian miracles may be referred to four periods. The first period contains those which are recorded in the New Testament, and reaches to about A. D. 70. Of these there can be no doubt among Christians. The next period may be of thirty-seven years, and ends about A. D. 107. There is reason to think it probable that some miracles were then performed by those who preached and planted the Gospel in Pagan countries. The third reaches from thence to Constantine. For some of the miracles in these ages, in the second and third centuries, so much could be alleged as should restrain us from determining too positively against them, and denying them all. The last period is from Constantine to where you please, the defence of which may be left to those who are inclined to undertake it at the hazard of misapplying their pains. One sort of miracle seems to have been much wanted, and that was to cast the “romancing devil” out of the Christians of those times; howbeit this kind goeth not out so easily, and stands in awe of no exorcisms. If it be asked when miraculous powers ceased? the proper answer seems to be, that these powers cease to us when we cease to find satisfactory evidence for them. But it may not be amiss to declare once for all, that I would not engage for the truth of any of them after A. D. 107, and that I desire as to this point to be ranked not among the deniers and rejecters, but among the doubters.—*Jordin’s Remarks*, vol. I. p. 285-6.

ers, leading the people to the deserts—famines—pestilences—earthquakes—fearful sights and great signs from heaven—the persecution of the apostles—the apostacy of some Christians—a preservation of the faithful—the spreading of the gospel through the Roman world—the Roman standards defiling the holy place—the city encompassed with armies, walls, and trenches—the retiring of the Christians to the mountains—the greatest tribulation that ever was known—the time when these things should happen\*—the comparative happiness of the barren woman when a mother killed and eat her own child—wars and rumours of wars, nation rising against nation, and kingdom against kingdom—the sea and the waves roaring—the dispersion of the captive Jews through all nations—the continuance of the desolation—and a shortening of the days of vengeance for the sake of the elect,—all which things came to pass: And the history of the fulfilment of these prophecies is preserved by a Jew [Josephus], whose prejudices would have led him rather to controvert than confirm the authority of Jesus, as well as by Pagan writers who despised him.

*The predictions of the Apostles concerning Antichrist are at this moment fulfilling—*“ Let no man deceive you by any means, for that day shall not come except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing

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\* This generation shall not pass away till all these things be fulfilled.



himself that he is God;" "even him whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness." Now, the Spirit speaketh expressly, that, in the latter times, some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their conscience seared with a hot iron, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.

This argument is well stated by Dr. Dick in his Essay on the Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures:—"In the writings of Paul and John, it is foretold that a certain power should arise which would assume the characters and attributes of divinity, change the laws and ordinances of heaven, work signs and lying wonders to confirm its usurped authority and impious tenets, and persecute with unrelenting fury those who should refuse to submit to its dominion. What is still more remarkable, it is foretold that this power would profess the Christian religion; for the man of sin is represented as sitting not in a temple of idols, but in the temple of God. Some of the doctrines and practices which he would impose upon mankind are specified, and the very place where he would erect his throne is pointed out—the imperial city of Rome."\* Let any person seriously consider this account, with all its particulars, and he will be convinced

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\* 2 Thessal. ii. 1.—2 Tim. iv. 1—3.—Rev. xvii. &c.

that nothing was more improbable than the appearance of such a power at the time when its rise was predicted. Who could have imagined that any person calling himself by the name of Christ would dare to usurp his place, and style himself the head of his church ; would carry his impiety and arrogance so far as to claim the titles of Lord and God, and the attributes of holiness and infallibility ; would have the audacity to interpose his mandates in cases already decided by the supreme authority of heaven ; to prohibit what God had permitted and commanded, and to enjoin what he had forbidden ? Who could have supposed that Christians, in the days of the apostles, so enlightened and so jealous of their spiritual liberties, would ever become so stupid and indifferent as to allow such a power to raise itself on the ruins of their religion and their reason, and to exercise an imperious sway over their bodies and their consciences ? Could fancy in its wildest workings have conceived, that Rome, the mistress of the world, the city where the Cæsars reigned, and idolatry triumphed in the plenitude of power and splendour ; that Rome, where Christianity was little known, and was known only to be hated and proscribed, would at some future period acknowledge as its sovereign a Christian priest ? Nothing could have been more remote from the apprehensions of men ; and if such an event or combination of events had by some chance been suggested, it would have been deemed equally absurd, as the most extravagant dream of a madman. Yet these improbable predictions have been most punctually fulfilled in all their circumstances, as Protestant writers have unanswerably proved.

*And the prophecy of the Apocalypse*, which concludes the sacred volume, of which some parts are fulfilled, some are fulfilling, and some will extend to the utmost age of the world, when time shall be no more, when faith shall be swallowed up in vision, and unbelief shall yield to dreadful reality—all concur to set the stamp of divinity on the Scriptures of the New Testament; and every succeeding age gives additional strength to this evidence;—it is a constant, increasing, unanswerable evidence.

But there remains a section, the most important, because the most essential for the welfare of the individual,—THE EVIDENCE OF THE SPIRIT, which they that believe on Jesus shall receive. “In this sense,” remarks Dr. Doddridge, “though the miraculous communication of the Spirit be ceased, he that believes hath still the witness in himself: and while the Spirit beareth witness with his spirit, that he is a child of God, he cannot doubt but that the word by which he was, as it were, begotten unto him is indeed a divine and incorruptible seed. And, perhaps, there are certain seasons of pressing temptation in which the most learned as well as most illiterate will find this the surest anchor of the soul.”\* This gives to the word of God an EFFICACY, without which the most splendid array of evidence is of little avail. The miracles and preaching of Jesus Christ himself do not appear to have been extensively successful in collecting proselytes; but when he had ascended, and when the Spirit from on high was poured out, three thousand were added to the

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\* Three Sermons on the Evidences of Christianity.

church by one sermon of the Apostle Peter. "When writers against infidelity," says Dr. Dick, "deny, or overlook the necessity of the illuminating and regenerating influences of the Spirit, they defend a religion, a fundamental article of which they do not know, or they are too proud to admit. A conviction of the understanding is not always followed by the consent of the heart, as is plain from the instance of the Pharisees, Mark iii. 22—30. A supernatural influence, therefore, acting on the minds of those whom they addressed, must have accompanied the discourses of the first Christian Missionaries, rendering them effectual to conquer strong prejudices, controul imperious lusts, and cause a complete revolution in the ideas, principles, inclinations, and conduct of myriads of converts. What the discourses of the apostles did, their writings may be said to have done—there is no reason for making any distinction." If this argument require any additional illustration, it will be read in letters of light, in the progress of the Gospel in our own day, in the northernmost regions of our globe, among the formerly brutal, now humanized Greenlanders, and in the softer isles of the Pacific Ocean, among the once depraved and licentious Polynesians, who have received the law, and whose modest and chaste behaviour adorn the profession of Christianity.

## ADVANTAGES.

THE advantages of Christianity are commensurate with the existence of man,—life and immortality are brought to light by the Gospel ;—yet the advantages it confers upon the briefer space of mortal life, are incalculable, “ though, being chiefly felt in the obscurity of private stations, they necessarily escape the observation of history.”\*

From the first general notification of Christianity to the present day, there have been in every age many millions whose names were never heard of, made better by it, not only in their conduct, but in their disposition ; and happier, not so much in their external circumstances, as in that which is *inter prœcordia*, in that which alone deserves the name of happiness, the tranquillity and consolation of their thoughts. It has been, since its commencement, the author of virtue and happiness to millions and millions of the human race. It has descended into families, has diminished the pressure of private tyranny, improved every domestic endearment, given tenderness to the parent, humanity to the master, respect to superiors, and to inferiors security and ease ; and left throughout all the dependencies and connections of social life evident marks of its benevolent spirit. It has insensibly worked itself into the inmost frame and constitution of civil states. It has given a tinge to the complexion of their governments, to the temper and administration of their laws. It has softened

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\* Paley ; quoted by Adams, Relig. World, Vol. I. p. 198.

the rigour of despotism, and tamed the insolence of conquest. It has in some degree taken away the edge of the sword, and thrown even over the horrors of war a veil of mercy." "I should love the religion of Christ," says Dr. Knox, "even as an heathen philosopher and philanthropist, for its beneficent effects on the human race. It is the guide of youth, the support of age, the repose of the weary, and the refuge of the miserable. It arrests the hand of the oppressor, by appaling his conscience, or if haply the oppressor should prevail, it teaches the oppressed to look with confidence to a Deliverer, mighty to save."

## GOVERNMENT OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH.

THE Church of Jerusalem, founded by the Apostles, was the model of all those that were afterwards erected during the first century. In these early times every Christian church consisted of the people, their ministers, and deacons. "The people were undoubtedly the first in authority; for the Apostles shewed by their example, that nothing of moment was to be carried on or determined without the consent of the assembly, which chose their own rulers and teachers, or received them by a free and authoritative consent when recommended by others."\* Their *Ministers* [*i. e.* servants] were indiscrimi-

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\* Mosheim.—It seems evident, however, from "The Acts of the Apostles," that the primitive "elders" were nominated by the Apostles and Evangelists.

nately called Elders, Bishops, Presbyters, Pastors; were equal in rank; and no one assumed any authority over their brethren. The *Deacons* were those who managed the temporalities of the church, with which the pastors at first did not interfere; accounting it their highest honour and privilege to be entirely devoted to prayer and the ministry of the word. "Three or four Presbyters," continues Mosheim, "men of remarkable piety and candour, ruled their small congregations in perfect harmony; nor did they stand in need of any president or superior to maintain concord and order where no dissensions were known. But the number of Presbyters and Deacons increasing with that of the churches, and the sacred work of the ministry growing more painful and weighty by a number of additional duties, these new circumstances required new regulations. It was then judged necessary that one man of distinguished gravity and wisdom should preside in the council of Presbyters, in order to distribute among his colleagues their several tasks, and to be a centre of union to the whole society. This person was at first styled the Angel (Rev. ii. 3.) of the church to which he belonged, but was afterwards distinguished by the name of Bishop or Inspector. Let none, however," he adds, "confound the Bishops of this primitive and golden period of the church with those of whom we read in the following ages; for though they were both distinguished by the same name, yet they differed extremely, and that in many respects. A Bishop, during the first and second centuries, was a person who had the care of one Christian assembly, which, at that time, was, generally speaking, small enough to be contained in a pri-

vate house ; in this assembly he acted not so much with the authority of a *master* as with the zeal and diligence of a faithful *servant*. He instructed the people, performed the several parts of divine worship, attended the sick, and inspected into the circumstances and supplies of the poor. He charged, indeed, the Presbyters with the performances of those duties and services which the multiplicity of his engagements rendered it impossible for him to fulfil ; but had not the power to decide or enact any thing without the consent of the Presbyters and people.”

At length, however, the titles of metropolitans, primates, and other dignities being introduced ; the form of church government deviated as much in its difference of rank and haughtiness of domination from the simplicity of Apostolic times, as the church itself did in the tautology of its liturgies, the pomp of its ritual, and the showy magnificence of its service, from the purity of doctrine, and consequent efficacy of its primitive ministrations.

## HISTORICAL NOTICES.

THE disciples were first called Christians at Antioch, about the year A. D. 43. “ When the first teachers of the Gospel, the apostles of Jesus, died,” Jortin remarks, “ their authority in a great measure died with them, and devolved not upon their successors—but it still lives in their writings,” which contain the only code of Christian law, and the only veritable record of Christian history



during that period which was to form the model and exhibit the example of a Christian church.

A clear and unpolluted fountain, fed by secret channels with the dew of heaven, when it grows a large river, and takes a long and winding course, receives a tincture from the various soils through which it passes. Thus Christianity, plain and simple in its principles, and calculated for general utility, when it became a bulky system, was tainted in its progress by the different nations through which it passed. One may trace in it the genius of the loquacious and ever-wrangling Greeks : the imagination of the enthusiastic Africans, sublimed by the heat of a tropical sun : the fooleries of the superstitious Egyptians, whose fertile soil and warm climate produced monks and hermits, swarming like animals sprung from the impregnated mud of the Nile : and the proud domineering spirit of the ambitious and political Romans, who were resolved to rule over the world in one shape or other. To these may be added the Jewish contracted and illiberal zeal for trifles—the learned subtlety of the gentile philosophers—and the pomp and ceremony of Paganism.

This sketch forms a brief outline of the progress of what is called the Christian church, from its humble but divine origin, when the source of its prosperity was the effusion of the Spirit, like dew from the womb of the morning, till it lost that distinctive character which the king of martyrs gave it before the tribunal of Pilate, and became established by law an essential part and portion of the kingdoms of this world. From that period till the Reformation, darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people. With the Reformation sprung up,

or revived, sometimes under the same, sometimes under different names, the various sects which have ever since divided the Christian world, and of which the following pages will give some account.

Even the Apostolic age was not free from mistake; and Newton, in his *Review of Ecclesiastical History*, has shewn that the seeds of all errors and heresies, the fashionable of his day, as well as those more generally despised, were sown in the first age, and appeared so early as to give occasion for the Apostle's censures against them; and has assigned in general the principles to which all these delusions may be reduced—the springs to which these inebriating streams may be traced, “for,” as he aptly remarks, “the operations of the human mind seem to be much more simple and limited than we are ordinarily aware. As there can be no new truths, though every truth appears new to us which we have not known before, so it is probable there can be now no new errors; at least it is certain that a competent knowledge of antiquity, or even a careful perusal of the Apostles' writings, will furnish sufficient evidence that some modern authors and teachers are by no means the inventors of the ingenious schemes they have presented to the public. Truth, like the sun, maintains a constant course; every thing would stagnate and die if we were deprived of it for a single day; but errors are like comets, which, though too eccentric to be subject exactly to our computations, yet have their periods of approach and recess, and some of them have appeared and been admired, and have been withdrawn and forgot over and over again.”

Were Christianity to be traced only in the lives of

those who have received its doctrines and exemplified it in their conduct, the story of its conquests, though delightful, would be wonderfully circumscribed; that, however, is impossible, either in the communion of the church, or in her history—the tares have sprung up with the wheat from the beginning, and will so continue to the end. It is well where they are not cherished as wheat. Unhappily, ecclesiastical story exhibits a woeful neglect of our Lord's caution—"let both grow together until the harvest;" and in the persecutions of the truly pious, striking but melancholy illustrations of the divine wisdom that dictated it—"lest, while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them."

For some ages Christians exhibited, in the bitterness of their revillings, the admixture of worldly wrath, which had usurped the garb of holy zeal, until, upon obtaining power, their priesthood adopted the principles and practice of the heathen they had displaced. Rancorous controversy has ever been the token of a decline in practical piety:—the forerunner of mortal persecution, where the means were afforded, against the conscientious adherents of truth, of contempt or disgust for Christianity itself among superficial inquirers, and of a happy repose in indolent conformity to the ruling party among the careless.

It is worthy of remark, that error or philosophy can boast of few martyrs. True Christianity owes much to persecution—the blood of the martyrs has been the seed of the church; while the sufferings of the saints have generally winnowed the corn from the chaff. Perse-

cution first arose from a nation who gloried in being the peculiar people of God, then from the heathen; the severest, however, have been inflicted by a church which styles herself, by way of pre-eminence, “Catholic.”

## PAGAN PERSECUTIONS.

THE first Pagan persecution is remarkable for giving rise to a strong corroborative evidence from a heathen writer, with regard to the origin and progress of Christianity. Nero, whose name has become a synonyme for tyranny and cruelty, was reported to have set fire to Rome; and as he appeared in the dress of an actor enjoying the awful conflagration as a theatrical entertainment, “neither the Emperor’s donations, nor the atonements offered to the gods, could remove the scandal of this report;\*” but it was still believed that the city had been burned by his instigation. Nero, therefore, to put a stop to the rumour, charged the fact, and inflicted the severest punishment for it upon the Christians, as they were commonly called—a people detestable for their crimes. The author of this sect was Christ, who, in the reign of Tiberius, was put to death by Pontius Pilate. The destructive superstition, which was by this means suppressed for the present, soon broke out again, and not only overspread Judea, where it first arose, but reached even to Rome, where all abominations from every quarter are

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\* Tacitus.

sure to meet and to find acceptance. Some who confessed themselves Christians were first apprehended, and a vast multitude afterwards, upon their impeachment, who were condemned, not so much for burning the city as for being the objects of universal hatred. Their sufferings and torments were heightened by mockery and derision. Some were enclosed in the skins of wild beasts, that they might be torn to pieces by dogs ; others were crucified ; and others, being covered with inflammable matter, were lighted up as torches at the close of the day. These spectacles were exhibited in Nero's gardens, where he held a kind of Circensian show, either mixing with the populace in the habit of a charioteer, or himself contending in the race. Hence it came to pass that criminal, and undeserving of mercy as they were, yet they were pitied, as being destroyed merely to gratify his savage and cruel disposition, and not with any view to the public good."

In this persecution, the apostles, Paul and Peter, are said to have fallen ; but so far from the latter having occupied any conspicuous station in the Imperial city, it is not certain whether he ever was within her walls. The other persecutions under the Emperors which followed, have usually been all included in the *ten Heathen Persecutions* ; but the number is inaccurate. Besides that just noticed, the principal were those under Domitian, A. D. 93 ; Trajan, 104 ; Hadrian, 125 ; M. Aurelius, 151 ; Severus, 197 ; Maximin, 235 ; Decius, 250 ; Valerian, 257 ; Aurelian, 272 ; Numerian, 283 ; Dioclesian, and Maximian and Licinius, 303—313.

Excepting Nero and Domitian, it is remarkable that

the most profligate and abandoned of the Heathen Emperors were those in whose reigns the Christians suffered least, while the moral, philosophical, and pious, were the most determined opposers and persecutors of the faith ; and that, while they could bring no charge against them for any crime calculated to disturb the peace, or injure the interest of society. A most striking instance of this occurs in the persecution under Trajan : it is preserved in a letter of the younger Pliny, then governor of Bithynia, written to the Emperor, requesting instructions respecting the mode of treatment to be adopted towards Christians :—" It is my usual custom, Sir, to refer all things of which I harbour any doubts to you. For who can better direct my judgment in its hesitation, or instruct my understanding in its ignorance? I never had the fortune to be present at any examination of Christians before I came into this province, I am therefore at a loss to determine what is the usual object either of inquiry or of punishment, and to what length either of them is to be carried. It has also been with me a question very problematical, whether any distinction should be made between the young and the old, the tender and the robust : whether any room should be given for repentance, or the guilt of Christianity once incurred is not to be expiated by the most unequivocal retractation : whether the name itself, abstracted from any flagitiousness of conduct, or the crimes connected with the name, be the object of punishment. In the meantime, this hath been my method with respect to those who were brought before me as Christians :—I asked them whether they were Christians? If they pleaded guilty, I interro-

gated them twice afresh, with a menace of capital punishment. In case of obstinate perseverance, I ordered them to be executed; for of this I had no doubt whatever was the nature of their religion, that a sullen and obstinate inflexibility called for the vengeance of the magistrate. Some were infected with the same madness, whom, on account of their privilege of citizenship, I reserved to be sent to Rome to be referred to your tribunal. In the course of this business, informations pouring in, as is usual when they are encouraged more cases occurred. An anonymous libel was exhibited, with a catalogue of names of persons who yet declared that they were not Christians then, or ever had been; and they repeated after me an invocation of the gods and of your image, which, for this purpose, I had ordered to be brought with the images of the deities. They performed sacred rites with wine and frankincense, and execrated Christ; none of which things, I am told, a real Christian can ever be compelled to do. On this account I dismissed them. Others, named by an informer, first affirmed, and then denied the charge of Christianity, declaring they had been Christians, but had ceased to be so some years ago, others still longer, some even twenty years ago. All of them worshipped your image and the statues of the gods, and also execrated Christ. And this was the account which they gave of the nature of their religion they once professed, whether it deserves the name of crime or error, namely, that they were accustomed on a stated day to meet before daylight, and to repeat among themselves a hymn to Christ as to a god, and bind themselves by an oath, with an obliga-

tion of not committing any wickedness, but, on the contrary, of abstaining from thefts, robberies, and adulteries; also of not violating their promise, or denying a pledge; after which it was their custom to separate, and to meet again at a promiscuous harmless meal; from which last practice, however, they desisted, after the publication of my edict; in which, agreeably to your orders, I forbade any societies of that sort. On which account I judged it the more necessary to inquire, by torture, from two females, who were said to be deaconesses, what is the real truth—but nothing could I collect except a depraved and excessive superstition. Deferring, therefore, any farther investigation, I determined to consult you; for the number of culprits is so great as to call for serious consultation. Many persons are informed against, of every age, and of both sexes, and more still will be in the same situation. The contagion of the superstition hath spread not only through cities, but even in villages and the country. Not that I think it impossible to check and to correct it. The success of my endeavours hitherto forbids such desponding thoughts; for the temples, once almost desolate, begin to be frequented; and the sacred solemnities, which had long been intermitted, are now attended afresh; and the sacrificial victims are now sold every where, which once could scarcely find a purchaser. Whence I conclude, that many might be reclaimed, were the hope of impunity on repentance absolutely confirmed.”

The moral principles which these Christians professed ought to have recommended them to any wise magistrate;



but so thought not the Heathen philosophers. Their calumniators were encouraged ; and when Justin, in his first Apology, presented to Marcus Aurelius about A. D. 151—2, said to the Emperor, we desire a fair trial and no favour, if we are guilty punish us, if we are innocent protect us, their reasonable equitable request was little attended to ; although accompanied by this noble declaration,—we do not desire you to punish our calumniators, their own wickedness and ignorance is punishment enough.

Persecution continued, yet the same Apologist could say :—“ We are slain with the sword, we are crucified, we are cast to the wild beasts, we are bound with chains, tortured, and burned ; and yet we are not only constant to our profession, but we increase and multiply—the more we are persecuted and destroyed, the more are added to our numbers. As a vine, by being pruned and cut close, puts forth new shoots, and bears a greater abundance of fruit, so it is with us, who are the vine which God and his Christ have planted.”

If the Christians increased during the periods of persecution, they increased doubly during the intervals of peace, till, in the reign of Constantine, they are confidently asserted to have outnumbered the Pagans ; but the accession of numbers formed no real accession of strength. Nominal professors abounded, men who had the form, but denied the power of religion ; and this was lamentably shewn during each successive persecution after the middle of the second century, by the increasing proportion of those who apostatized during each

successive time of trouble, and again applied for admission into the church when the storm had passed by.\*

Julian was the last of the Heathen Emperors. He had been brought up in, but apostatized from the faith : his inveteracy to Christianity was extreme ; yet he affected to despise the profession, and wished rather to shew his contempt by harassing vexations, than by sanguinary executions. To disprove the prophecies of Christ, and get rid of that unassailable standing miracle, the existence of the Jews as a nation in a dispersed state, he attempted to rebuild the temple of Jerusalem. His avowed contest between Paganism and Christianity was decided by a miraculous display of divine power,—balls of fire bursting from the earth dispersed the workmen, and put an end to the undertaking. The miracle is attested by both Heathen and Christian writers, has been elucidated by Warburton in his “ Julian,” and has not even been doubted by Gibbon.

\* Eusebius gives the following character of the Christians towards the close of the third century :—“ Through too much liberty, the Christians grew negligent and slothful, envying and reproaching one another, waging, as it were, civil wars among themselves : Bishops quarrelling with Bishops, and the people divided into parties. Hypocrisy and deceit were grown to the highest pitch of wickedness. They were become so insensible as not to think of appeasing the divine anger : but, like Atheists, they thought the world destitute of any providential government and care, and thus added one crime to another. The Bishops themselves had thrown off all concern about religion, and did nothing but quarrel, and envy, and hate one another ; they were full of ambition, and tyrannically used their power.” It has been sometimes alleged, that the temporal establishment of religion and its alliance with the state were the causes of its corruption—the opposite appears the fact, they were the consequences.

From that time till the Reformation, the existence of the Christian religion itself is a miracle. The accumulation of superstition, idolatry, and wealth, during ages of ignorance, would have smothered every spark of vitality in the body, had it not been preserved among a few dispersed members in the sequestered vallies or inaccessible rocks of the Alps, in the distant regions and unheeded districts of the empire, while the sacred volumes, confined in an unknown tongue, were sepulchered in the cloisters of the Papacy.



# SKETCH

OF THE

## DENOMINATIONS

&c. &c.

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HAVING given this preliminary account of *Atheism, Deism, Theophilanthropism, Paganism, Judaism, Mahometanism*, and *Christianity*, we now proceed to the DENOMINATIONS in the Christian world. In the first ages of Christianity there were various sects which have long ago sunk into oblivion, and whose names therefore exist only in the pages of ecclesiastical history. It is not our purpose even to glance at these *ancient* sects, but only briefly to notice those which in the present day attract our attention. The most distinguished may be included under the following arrangement:—Opinions respecting the person of Christ; respecting the means and measure of God's favour; and respecting Church Government, together with the administration of ceremonies.

## I.

## OPINIONS RESPECTING THE PERSON OF CHRIST.

JESUS CHRIST being the medium by which the Deity hath imparted a knowledge of his will to mankind, the person of Christ has been eagerly investigated, and *the nature of God* rendered the subject of rude and unhal-  
lowed controversy. This has filled the religious world with violent contentions, nor are they likely to be brought speedily to a termination. In the meantime, it would become us to discuss this topic with great modesty and humility. It is, however, my present province to state the existing opinions respecting this abstruse subject; it shall be done in a few words, and I hope with a degree of accuracy

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## TRINITARIANS.\*

THE TRINITARIAN believes the doctrine of a Trinity, by which is generally understood, that there are three distinct persons in one undivided Godhead—the Father,

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\* Dr. Priestly admits, that all the early writers that have come down to us from Justin Martyr to Athanasius, from the middle of the second century to the middle of the fourth, were Trinitarians, with the solitary exception of the author of the Clementine, Homilies, and Recognitions.—*History of Early Opinions*, vol. IV. p. 391, quoted by Adam, vol. II. p. 105.

the Son, and the Holy Ghost. The word *Trinity* is not to be found in the Bible, but is a scholastic term, derived from the Latin word *Trinitas*, denoting a three-fold unity. Calvin himself reprobates the term, as being *barbarous*, and of human invention. The most learned writers entertain such various and contradictory sentiments respecting this mystery, that it is difficult to know to whom the term Trinitarian is justly applicable. Waterland, Howe, Sherlock, Pearson, Burnet, Beveridge, Wallis, and Watts, have each of them separate opinions on this subject. Dr. Priestly, however, thinks Trinitarians reducible to two classes; those who believe that there is no proper divinity in Christ, beside that of the Father, and the class of Tritheists who maintain that there are three equal and distinct Gods.\*

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\* The Doctor must never have read the Westminster Confession of Faith, where it is distinctly asserted, that “in the *unity* of the Godhead there be Three persons of *one substance*, power, and Eternity;” nor the Shorter Catechism, where, after the positive avowal, “There is but *ONE* only, the living and true God;” the answer to the question, “How many persons are there in the Godhead? is—There are three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and *these three are one God, the same in substance*, equal in power and glory.” Yet that Confession is the standard of the Church of Scotland, of all the Seceders in that country, and of a great part of the Presbyterians in Ireland and America—and the Shorter Catechism is, or ought to be, taught in all the Parochial Schools in Scotland. Why it and the Bible are shoved into a corner in other seminaries in that country, to make way for Collections, Extracts, Beauties, &c. &c. let their patrons tell; but assuredly, neither the discipline of the schools, nor the morals of the pupils, have been improved by the change.

In this classification, a numerous body of Trinitarians are omitted, whose belief is contained in the quotations in the note. These all allow that there is much incomprehensibility in the doctrine, and consider it more properly an article of faith than a subject of investigation; every attempt to penetrate into which, farther than God has expressly revealed in his word, being at best injudicious, often dangerous. The doctrine is offered to our minds, say they, for reception, as are many of the phenomena of nature. The *fact* is declared, the *mode* is hid, and we are not therefore to deny the revealed truth, because, in our present state, and with our limited faculties, we cannot penetrate the hidden mystery.

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## ATHANASIANS.

NEARLY allied to the class of Tritheists are the *Athanasians*, a name derived from Athanasius, a father of the Christian church, who lived in the fourth century. The creed, which bears his name in the Common Prayer Book, is not of his composition;\* and so little attached

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\* Most writers before Vossius took it for granted, that what is called the Athanasian creed was drawn up by Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, in the fourth century; but it is now generally thought not to be his, and to have been written originally in Latin for the use of some part of the Christian church. It is commonly attributed to Vigilius, the African, who lived about



was Archbishop Tillotson to it, that in writing to Dr. Burnet the historian, he says, "I wish we were well rid of it." The episcopal church in America has rejected it.\* Were the account of the doctrine of the Trinity contained in this creed ever so just and satisfactory, yet its *damnatory* clauses are highly exceptionable, and have given great offence to some of the more sensible and worthy members of the established church. On this subject, Dr. Prettyman, [Tomline] in his *Elements*, speaks with candour and moderation—"Great objection has been made to the clauses of this creed, which denounce eternal damnation against those who do not believe the Catholic faith, as here stated; and it certainly is to be lamented, that assertions of so peremptory a nature, unexplained and unqualified, should have been used in any human composition." The prelate then endeavours to account for the introduction of such clauses into the creed; and adds—"We know that different persons have deduced different and even opposite doctrines from the words of Scripture, and consequently there

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the end of the fifth century. But Dr. Waterland assigns it to Hilary, Bishop of Arles, who, about A. D. 430, composed the Exposition of Faith which now bears the name of the Athanasian Creed, for the use of the Gallican Clergy, and particularly those of the diocese of Arles. This creed, obtained in France about A. D. 850, was received in Spain and Germany between one or two hundred years later, was used in some parts of Italy, A. D. 966, sanctioned at Rome 1014, and acknowledged in Britain since the tenth century.—*Waterland's Crit. Hist. of the Athanas. Creed*—*Adam, Relig. World*, vol. II. p. 105—6.

\* This must allude to only a very small section. As a church, the Episcopalian in America now [1830] receive it.

must be many errors among Christians ; but since the gospel no where informs us what degree of error will exclude from eternal happiness—I am ready to acknowledge, that in my judgment, notwithstanding the authority of former times, our church would have acted more wisely and more consistently with its general principles of mildness and toleration, if it had not adopted the *damnatory* clauses of the Athanasian creed. Though I firmly believe, that the doctrines of this creed are all founded in Scripture, I cannot but conceive it to be both *unnecessary* and *presumptuous* to say, that “ except every one do keep them whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.”

Mr Broughton, in his valuable *Dictionary of all Religions*, under the article Trinity, has the following explanatory paragraph, which may assist the reader on this most abstruse subject. “ The doctrine of the TRINITY, as professed in the Christian church, is briefly this : that that there is ONE GOD in THREE distinct PERSONS, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST ; *person* signifying here the same as *essence*, with a particular manner of subsistence, which the Greek fathers called *hypostasis*, taking it for the incommunicable property that makes a person. The *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Ghost*, are believed to be three *distinct persons* in the divine nature ; because the Holy Scriptures, in speaking of these three, so distinguish them from one another, as we use in common speech to distinguish *three several persons*. There are many instances to this purpose, particularly the form of administering the sacrament of baptism, which runs, *in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost* ; and that solemn

benediction, with which St. Paul concludes his second epistle to the Corinthians: *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, &c.* And the *three Witnesses in heaven*, mentioned by St. John. This passage has for some time been thought an *interpolation*, and Dr. Tomline gives it up in his *Elements of Theology*.\*

“ Each of these three persons is affirmed to be God, because the names, properties, and operations of God, are in the Holy Scriptures attributed to each of them. The divinity of the Father is out of the question. That of the Son is proved from the following texts, among many others:—St. John says, *The Word was God*; St. Paul, that *God was manifested in the flesh*; that *Christ is over all, God blessed for ever*. Eternity is attributed to the Son: *The Son hath life in himself*. Perfection of knowledge—*As the Father knoweth me, so know I the Father*. The Creation of all things—*All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made*. And we are commanded to *honour the Son as we honour the Father*. The divinity of the Holy Ghost rests upon the following proofs, among others—*Lying to the Holy Ghost is called lying to God*. Because Christians are the *temples of the Holy Ghost*, they are said to be the *temples of God*. *His teaching all things, his guiding into all truth, his telling things to come, his*

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\* Trinitarians, in arguing with Socinians, consider the doctrine so completely established by the other passages of Scripture which ascribe to Christ all the attributes of God, and to the Holy Spirit a distinct personality—that even when they do not consider the text as spurious, they are willing to pass it over in their reasoning.

*searching all things, even the deep things of God, &c.* are alleged as plain characters of his divinity. Besides he is joined with God the Father, as an object of faith and worship in baptism and the apostolical benediction. This doctrine is called a *mystery*, because we are not able to comprehend the particular manner of existence of the three persons in the divine Nature." Dr. Jeremiah Taylor remarks with great piety, that "He who goes about to speak of the mystery of the Trinity, and does it by words and names of man's invention, talking of essences and existences, hypostases and personalities, priorities in co-equalities, and unity in pluralities, may amuse himself and build a tabernacle in his head, and talk something he knows not what; but the *good man*, who feels the power of the Father, and to whom the Son is become wisdom, sanctification, and redemption, in whose heart the love of the Spirit of God is shed abroad; *this man*, though he understands nothing of what is unintelligible, yet he alone truly understands the Christian doctrine of the Trinity."

It were well, if before we made up our mind on this intricate article of faith, we were carefully to read Dr. Watt's Essay on the Importance of any Human Schemes to explain the Doctrine of the Trinity. This essay shews, first, that no such scheme of explication is necessary to salvation; secondly, that it may yet be of great use to the Christian church; and, thirdly, that all such explications ought to be proposed with modesty to the world, and never imposed on the conscience.

Bishop Burnet tells us, that before the Reformation it was usual in England to have pictures of the Trinity.

God the Father was generally represented in the shape of an old man with a triple crown, and rays about his head ! The Son, in another part of the picture looked like a young man, with a single crown on his head, and a radiant countenance. The blessed Virgin was between them, in a sitting posture ; and the Holy Ghost, under the appearance of a dove, spread his wings over her. This picture, he tells us, is still to be seen in a prayer-book printed in the year 1526, according to the ceremonial of Salisbury. Skippon also tells us, there is at Padua a representation of the Trinity, being the figure of an old man with three faces and three beards. How contrary are these absurd representations of the Deity to the sublime declaration of our Saviour, John iv. 24, " God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

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## SABELLIANS.

THE *Sabellian* reduces the three persons in the Trinity to three characters or relations. This has been called by some a *modal* Trinity, and the persons who hold it *Modalists*. Sabellius, the founder of this sect, espoused the doctrine in the third century.\* Of his tenets, the

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\* This sect, as it had its rise, so it chiefly prevailed in Upper Egypt, where Sabellius was a Bishop. It was opposed by Dionysius, Bishop of Alexandria, and condemned in a Council, held at Rome, A. D. 253 ; in

accounts are various. Some say, he taught that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, were one subsistence, and one person, with three names; and that in the Old Testament the Deity delivered the law as Father, in the New Testament dwelt among men as the Son, and descended on the Apostles as the Holy Spirit. This opinion gains ground in the principality of Wales.\*

“The Sabellians (says Mr Broughton) make the *Word* and the *Holy Spirit* to be only virtues, emanations, or functions of the *Deity*. They held, that he who in heaven is the *Father* of all things, descended into the Virgin, became a child, and was born of her as a *Son*, and that having accomplished the mystery of our salvation, he diffused himself on the Apostles in tongues of fire, and was then denominated the *Holy Ghost*. They resembled God to the sun, the illuminative virtue or quality whereof was the *Word*, and its warming virtue the *Holy Spirit*. The word they taught was darted like a divine ray, to accomplish the work of redemption; and that, being re-ascended to heaven, as the ray returns to its source, the warmth of the Father was communicated after a like manner to the apostles. Such was the language of Sabellians.”

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Sabellius having been a disciple of Noëtus—Noëtians is another name by which his followers have sometimes

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another at Alexandria, A. D. 319; and seems to have been extinguished, till it revived under several modified shapes in the last century.

\* Chiefly among the General Baptists. The Swedenborgians also have been charged with it.

been known. But, according to Mosheim, “ his sentiments differed from Noëtus in this, that the latter was of opinion that the person of the Father had assumed the human nature of Christ ; whereas the former maintained, that a certain energy only proceeded from the Supreme Parent, or a certain portion of the divine nature was united to the Son of God, the man Jesus ; and he considered in the same manner the Holy Ghost as a portion of the everlasting Father.” Much confusion, however, involves all the accounts which have been handed down to us of his tenets, some of them differing only in the manner of expression from sentiments deemed orthodox ; and, perhaps, we ought to judge favourably, for it has been often remarked, and ought to be attended to in all disputable theological points, said to be held by ancient Heretics, that the statements of their opinions are generally derived from the representations of their adversaries, and are therefore liable to suspicion.

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Between the system of Sabellianism, and what is termed the *Indwelling* scheme, there appears to be a great resemblance, if it be not precisely the same, differently explained. The Indwelling scheme is chiefly founded on that passage in the New Testament, where the apostle, speaking of Christ, says—“ In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.” Dr. Watts, towards the close of his life, became a Sabellian, and wrote several pieces in defence of it. His sentiments on the Trinity appear to have been, that “ The Godhead, the Deity itself, personally distinguished as the Father, was united

to the man Christ Jesus ; in consequence of which union or *indwelling* of the Godhead, he became properly God." Mr. Palmer, in his useful edition of *Johnson's Life of Watts*, observes, that Dr. Watts conceived this union to have subsisted before the Saviour's appearance in the flesh, and that the human soul of Christ existed with the Father from before the foundation of the world ; on which ground he maintains the real descent of Christ from heaven to earth, and the whole scene of his humiliation, which he thought incompatible with the common opinion concerning him. Dr. Doddridge is supposed to have been of these sentiments, and also Mr. Benjamin Fawcett, of Kidderminster, who published a valuable piece, entitled, *Candid Reflections concerning the Doctrine of the Trinity*.



## TRITHEISTS.

TRITHEISTS, or believers on three Gods, is a term of obloquy which has most unwarrantably been applied by Jews, Socinians, and Unitarians to the modern believers in the Trinity. It was, however, the proper name of a sect in the sixth century, whose chief was John Ascunage, a Syrian philosopher ; and whose notions, if correctly represented, merited the appellation. He is said to have imagined three natures, or substances, in the Deity, absolutely equal in all respects, and joined together by no common essence. This doctrine was



adopted by John Philoponus, an Alexandrian philosopher and grammarian of high reputation; and the sect was from him denominated Philoponists. Conon, Bishop of Tarsus, also agreed in the doctrine of three equal distinct Supreme existences; but he differed from the others in his views of the resurrection of the body, respecting which he held some unintelligible, unessential, and trifling opinions.

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## ARIANS.

OPINIONS derogatory to the supreme divinity of Christ arose even in the Apostles' days, and to them we owe the Gospel of John, which, it is generally allowed, was written to silence the objections of Ebion and Cerinthus. These opinions being revived and zealously propagated by Arius, received in consequence their name from him as their most eminent advocate; the controversy to which they gave rise was long and virulent. Socrates gives this account of its origin:—"Alexander, Bishop of Alexandria, discoursing one day too curiously concerning the doctrine of the Trinity in unity, in the presence of his presbyters and the rest of his clergy, Arius, one of the presbyters, supposed his Bishop to advance the doctrine of Sabellius; and, disliking that, he went into an opinion directly opposite." Soon the angry passions of the parties mixed in the debate, and the cause of truth was degraded by their personal hos-

tilities, the Ortnodox and the Heretics being equally guilty of substituting scurrility for argument. A council was summoned to settle the dispute ; it consisted of one hundred Bishops, and met in the See of Alexandria. The tenets of Arius were condemned, and himself excommunicated. Constantia, the Emperor's sister, having espoused his cause, the Emperor interfered, and endeavoured to effect a reconciliation. Flattered by such high seconds, both became more refractory and contentious ; and Constantine, in order to put an end to their disgraceful disputes, ordered a " general council," the first ever called, to be convoked. It met at Nice, in Bithynia, in the year 325. Three hundred and eighteen Bishops, attended by upwards of sixteen hundred inferior ecclesiastics, composed the assembly, of which Athanasius, then only a deacon in Alexandria, was the chief orthodox orator. They were nearly unanimous in condemning the tenets as heretical. This was what they had a right to do ; but they called in the civil magistrate to punish the heretic, and he was forthwith banished by " the first Christian" Emperor, his books ordered to be burned, and a capital punishment denounced against all those who should dare to keep them. This was what they had no right to do ; and they suffered accordingly for introducing such unlawful weapons into Christian warfare. Constantia, on her death-bed, urged her brother to favour the Arians. He exercised the power the orthodox had assigned him, recalled Arius from banishment, and repealed the laws he had enacted against the sect. Athanasius, now exalted to the bishoprick of Alexandria, refusing to relax his ecclesiastical censures,

another council [A. D. 335] was assembled at Tyre, and he was deposed. This sentence was confirmed by a third council, convoked at Constantinople next year, and he in his turn was exiled by the Emperor. Arius is said to have died by a wonderful judgment of God soon after; but so low had the character even of the orthodox become, that his death by poison is not more incredible than by miracle. These terrible contentions and persecutions of the Christians among themselves, caused the Pagans reverse the adage, "Behold how these Christians love one another," and adopt another, which unhappily became of juster and longer application, "No wild beast was so cruel an enemy to man as most of these Christians were to each other."

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The *Arian* derives his name from Arius, a Presbyter of Alexandria, who flourished about the year 315, and the propagation of whose doctrine occasioned the famous council of Nice, assembled by Constantine, in the year 325. Arius owned Christ to be God in a subordinate sense, and considered his death to be a propitiation for sin. The Arians acknowledge that the Son was the *word*, though they deny its being eternal; contending, that it had only been created prior to all other beings. Christ, say they, had nothing of man in him, except the flesh, with which the Logos (λογος) or *word*, spoken of by the Apostle John, was united, which supplied the rest. The Arians, though they deny that Christ is the *eternal God*, yet they contend against the Socinians for his *pre-existence*. His pre-existence they found on the two following passages, among many others:—BEFORE *Abra-*

*ham was, I AM.* And the prayer of Jesus—*Glorify me with that glory which I had with thee BEFORE the world began.* These, and other texts of a similar kind, are, in their opinion, irrefragable proofs that Christ did actually exist in another state before he was born of the Virgin Mary in the Land of Judea. This matter has been argued by various writers; and names of the first character have distinguished themselves in the Arian controversy. It has also been strongly urged by the advocates of Arianism, that the *pre-existent dignity* of Christ, accounts for that *splendid apparatus of prophecies and miracles*, with which the mission of the Messiah was attended. In modern times, the term Arian is indiscriminately applied to those who consider Jesus simply subordinate to the Father. Some of them believe Christ to have been the creator of the world; but they ALL maintain that he existed previous to his incarnation, though in his pre-existent state they assign him different degrees of dignity. Hence the appellation *High and Low Arian*.

That valuable practical writer, Mr. Job Orton, though he never published any thing explicitly on the Trinity, is generally supposed, during the latter period of his life, to have entertained these sentiments of the person of Christ. He used to recommend the two following tracts, as having given him the most satisfaction on the subject—*A sober and Charitable Disquisition on the Importance of the Doctrine of the Trinity*, by Simon Brown; and *An Essay towards a Demonstration of the Scripture Trinity*, by Dr. Scott. Of the system of Arianism, Dr. Clarke, in his *Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity*, Mr. Hen-

ry Taylor, in his learned work, entitled, *Ben Mordecai's Apology*, Mr. Tomkins, in his *Meditator*, and Mr. Hopkins, in his *Appeal to the Common Sense of all Christian People*, have been deemed the most able advocates. Mr. Whiston, the famous astronomer and translator of Josephus, revived this controversy in the beginning of the present century. Soon after, Dr. Clarke published his celebrated treatise, entitled, *the Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity*, which was disapproved of by the convocation, and answered by Dr. Waterland, who had been charged with verging towards Tritheism. "Erasmus, (says the *Encyclopædia Britannica*) seemed to have aimed in some measure to restore Arianism at the beginning of the 16th century, in his Commentaries on the New Testament. Accordingly he was reproached by his adversaries with Arian interpretations and glosses, Arian tenets, &c. To which he made little answer, save that there was no heresy more thoroughly extinct than that of the Arians. But Erasmus is known to have been exceedingly timid in his disposition, and confesses in one of his letters to a friend, that he possessed not the spirit of a martyr. Of the truth of this declaration, there were many proofs."

Dr. Price, in his sermons on the Christian doctrine, has taken great pains in explaining and defending the principles of Arianism. He states at large the nature of the doctrine, and enumerates the advantages arising from it in the explication of the Scriptures. To these discourses, the reader is referred, and whatever he may think of the arguments urged in favour of that system, he must admire the truly Christian spirit with which they are written.

The modern history of the Arian controversy may be found in a pamphlet, entitled, "An account of all the considerable Books and Pamphlets that have been wrote on either side, in the controversy concerning the Trinity, from the year 1712; in which is also contained an Account of the Pamphlets written this last year on each side by the Dissenters, to the end of the year 1719; published at London, 1720."

Thomas Emlyn, a pious and learned divine, should be mentioned here, since he has been rendered memorable for his sufferings in the cause of Arianism. He was a dissenting minister in Dublin, and there solely persecuted on account of his religious sentiments. He rejected the common notions of a Trinity, but firmly maintained the pre-existence of Christ. He died in London, 1741, and his works were published by his son, an eminent counsellor, in three volumes; to which are prefixed memoirs of the author.

Some few Arians, and most of the present Socinians, add to their creed the doctrines of Necessity, Materialism, and Universal Restoration, though these tenets are by no means peculiar to them. Towards the close of this Sketch will be found an explanation of Universal Restoration: and some little account shall be here given of Necessity and Materialism.

## NECESSITARIANS.

THE doctrine of *Necessity* regards the origin of human actions, and the specific mode of the divine government. Much controversy has there been on this abstruse subject. Collins, Priestly, Palmer, Price, Gregory, and Crombie, are authors who are distinguished in the controversy. The opponents of *Necessity* strenuously maintain, that it destroys all virtue and vice; whilst its advocates declare it to be the most consistent mode of explaining the divine government. It is not for us to determine, on so profound a subject, where the truth lies; and it is remarkable, that the perplexity of the theme seems to have harassed *angelic* minds, according to the representation of the great Milton—

Others apart, sat on a hill retir'd,  
In thoughts more elevate, and reason'd high,  
Of Providence, fore-knowledge, will, and fate;  
Fix'd fate, free-will, fore-knowledge, absolute,  
And found *no end*—in *wandering mazes* lost!

To short-sighted mortals, therefore, with all their boasted wisdom, the subject must appear dark, and in many respects unfathomable. The solution of such difficulties ought to be referred to a more enlightened sphere of being! Dr. Watts, indeed, thinks it probable that it will constitute one of the sublime employments of the blessed in the heavenly world.

## MATERIALISTS.

THE doctrine of *Materialism* respects the nature of the human soul, and the peculiar mode of its existence. All Materialists deny an intermediate state of consciousness between death and the resurrection. Drs. Price and Priestley had a friendly correspondence on this article; and though Dr. Price was no Materialist, yet he did not hold with an intermediate state. Those who deny the existence of an intermediate state, are often called *Soul-sleepers*. See Archdeacon Blackburn's *Historical View of this Controversy*, and Dr. Law's *Appendix* to his *Theory of Natural and Revealed Religion*. *The Light of Nature Pursued*, by Edward Search, Esq. is a very curious work relative to this subject. It contains ingenious illustrations: the author's real name was Tucker; he died in 1775.

Had not Necessity and Materialism been more of a philosophical than of a theological nature, they should have received a minuter explication.

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## SOCINIANS,

INCLUDING HUMANITARIANS AND UNITARIANS.

THE *Socinian* takes his name from Faustus Socinus, who died in Poland 1604. There were two who bore



the name Socinus, uncle and nephew, and both disseminated the same doctrine.

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LIVES OF THE SOCINI.

Of these two, LÆLIUS, reported the author of the sect, was a native of Tuscany. He was born at Sienna about 1525, and was educated for the profession of the law. There is little known of his early years, but only, that becoming dissatisfied with the dogmas of Rome, he diverged from the study of scholastic divinity, and sought in the pursuit of general knowledge some more rational foundation for his faith. As was natural, the free opinions of the Protestants attracted his attention, and, in 1547, he set out upon his travels through the countries where these were most openly professed; and, after traversing Germany, Poland, the Netherlands, England, and France, he fixed upon Zurich, in Switzerland, as his place of residence. Here he disseminated his doubts, and was suspected of heresy, but left an unsettled *rationale* to be more openly vowed and defended by his followers.

FAUSTUS, his nephew, then about twenty-four years of age, was at Lyons when the news of his uncle's death reached him. He hastened to Zurich, and took possession of his effects; but the pleasures of the Tuscan court, to which he immediately repaired, and the honours he received from the Grand Duke, effaced for the time his theological propensities. From some unknown cause of disgust, he retired to Germany in 1574, and resisting every invitation to return to his envied exaltation, he went to Basil, and adicted himself to the study of divinity. The scheme he adopted is that now known by his

name. This he first avowed in a treatise, "*De Jesu Christo Servatore*," which being in opposition to the opinions and belief of all the Protestants in Germany and Switzerland, he found it expedient to seek refuge in Poland [1579] from the "flagrant" opposition which his tenets were likely to meet with. He resided afterwards at different times at Cracow, married a lady of good family, and enjoyed the protection of several of the Polish Lords, till 1598, when the mob, instigated by some higher authorities, took the examination of his opinions into their hands, and settled the dispute by burning his house and destroying his manuscripts. He himself, however, escaped without bodily injury, and spent the remainder of his days tranquilly at the castle of the Grandee Blonski, about nine miles distant from the capital. He died, 1604. His works were published in the two first volumes of *Bibliotheca Fratrum Polonorum*.

It is difficult to trace the origin of the Socinian controversy. John Campanus is said to be the first of the reformers who distinguished himself on this side of the question. Next Michael Servetus, a Spanish physician, whom Calvin persecuted even to death; for in the year 1553 he was committed to the flames, by persons who had themselves just escaped the fangs of the Romish church, and who at least had nominally erected the standard of religious liberty. "It is impossible (says Dr. Maclaine) to justify the conduct of Calvin in the case of Servetus, whose death will be an indelible reproach upon the character of that eminent reformer. The only thing that can be alleged, not to deface, but to diminish his crime, is, that it was no easy matter for him to divest

himself at once of that persecuting spirit which had been so long nourished and strengthened by the Popish religion, in which he was educated. It was a remaining portion of the spirit of popery in the breast of Calvin, that kindled his unchristian zeal against the wretched Servetus.”\*

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\* The proceedings against Servetus received the approbation of almost all the most eminent ecclesiastics who then flourished. The reformed Swiss Cantons were unanimous in exhorting the Council of Geneva to punish the wicked man, and to put it out of his power to increase heresy. Farel, Bucer, and even Melancthon, approved of the measure. This, it is true, does not render the measure right, but it shows that the blame should not be exclusively attributed to Calvin.

LIFE OF SERVETUS.—So much has been said about Servetus, that a brief short notice of the “*only martyr*,” (if martyr he may be called) of whom the modern free-thinkers can boast, cannot be unacceptable. He was born at Villaneuva, in Arragon, 1509. He studied first civil law in the University of Toulouse; and in the agitation produced by the conflict of new and old opinions at the Reformation, the inquiries of young students were not always conducted with that sobriety which is best calculated to elucidate truth. Among others, Servetus was tempted into the dangerous field of speculation, and unfortunately adopted doctrines respecting the Trinity, which have always been considered heretical; and as Germany was distracted with a confusion of wild opinions, he hastened thither to disseminate his. After conversing with some of the most eminent reformers, he published [1551] a book, entitled, *De Trinitatis Erroribus*, and soon after two other treatises on the same subject. He then left Germany, returned to France, and studied medicine at Paris under Silvius. His thirst after knowledge was here conspicuous; and he is by some considered as one of those anatomists whose previous examination of the circulation of the blood paved the way for the great discovery of Harvey. His propensity for controversy involving him in a serious misunderstanding with the professors of that University, the Magistrates, who in that age took science as well as religion under their care, interfered, and he left Paris in disgust. For two or three years he settled at Lyons, as corrector of the press to the Frellons. Thence, on the invitation of the Archbishop, he went to Vienne, and for some time resided in his palace, where, had he confined his pursuits to medicine, or general literature, his life might have passed in tranquillity,

Having mentioned the persecution of Servetus by Calvin, truth, on the other hand, requires it to be mentioned that Socinus has been accused of persecuting one Francis David, who, on account of his rejecting the worship of Christ, was cast into prison, where he died. The persecuting spirit, discoverable in some of the reformers, diminishes the respectability of their characters, and the only apology that can be made for them is, what has been already mentioned, that the nature and foundation of religious liberty were not then fully understood.

The Socinians flourished greatly in Poland about the year 1551; and J. Siemienius, Palatine of Podolia, built purposely for their use the city of Racow. A famous catechism was published by them, called the Racovian Catechism; and their most able writers are known among the learned by the title of the *Polones Fratres*, or Polish Brethren. "Their writings were (says Dr. Mac-laine) republished together in the year 1656, in one great collection, consisting of six volumes in folio, under the title of *Bibliotheca Fratrum*. There are, indeed, in this collection, many pieces wanting, which were composed by the most eminent leaders of the sect; but what is there

and his name descended to posterity among the benefactors of mankind. But polemics were his bane, and engaging in them with that acrimony which produces rather personal enmity than conviction in an opponent, he was arrested. Escaping from prison, he fled for Italy, but, imprudently taking his route through Geneva, he again fell into the hands of the civil powers, who, in consonance with the principles and practice of the age committed the heretic to the hands of the executioner. An instance of indefensible cruelty, unhappily not singular among Protestants in succeeding times, and of which the disciples of Calvin were doomed in Scotland for twenty-two years to be the unpitied victims.

published, is nevertheless sufficient to give the attentive reader a clear idea of the doctrine of the Socinians, and of the nature of their institution, as a religious community." An interesting account of these several authors will be found in *Dr. Toulmin's Life of Socinus*.

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Owing to the imprudence of some of their students in breaking a crucifix, in 1638, a law was enacted, at the instance of the Roman Catholics, "that the academy at Racow should be demolished, its professors banished, the printing house destroyed, and the Socinian churches shut up." Ten years after, by an act of the Diet, held at Warsaw, they were banished for ever from the territory of Poland; and capital punishment was denounced against all those who should either profess their opinions or harbour their persons. In 1661, this act was renewed, and more rigorously enforced; and all of that persuasion who remained in the country were driven out, some with the loss of their goods, others at the risk of their lives, as neither sickness, nor any domestic consideration, could suspend the execution of the sentence. The unhappy exiles found refuge in Transylvania, where their opinions, embraced [1563] by Sigismund, the then reigning prince, through the influence of his physician, had still many abettors. Thence they were dispersed through the provinces of Silesia, Brandenburg, and Prussia, where traces of their descendants are still to be found; others, without success, sought a place where they and their brethren might dwell together, in Denmark, Holland, and England; "but none of the European nations," says Mosheim, "would be persuaded to grant a

public settlement to a sect whose members denied the divinity of Christ." They never, however, appear to have produced any other martyr than Servetus. Socinian tenets were little heard of in England till the reign of Charles I. when John Biddle, an independent minister, avowed them, who suffered various persecutions, and at last died in prison. A few embraced them; but Socinians or Unitarians formed no conspicuous party till towards the close of the eighteenth century, when the zeal and assiduity of Dr. Priestley, Thophilus Lindsay, Mr. Betsham, and a number of other distinguished writers, espoused and propagated these tenets. In 1794, Dr. Priestley having been ill treated by a misguided mob, retired to America, where, although received kindly as a sufferer for liberty, he never acquired much influence as a divine, nor was he very successful as a missionary, his congregation never having exceeded between thirty and forty. He died, 1804. His opinions have been more widely diffused since through that continent. The professions of Unitarianism some time ago congratulated themselves on their increase also in England; and within these few years they have opened places of worship in Edinburgh, Glasgow, and some other places in Scotland; but here their numbers do not appear to be considerable.

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The Socinian asserts, that Christ had no existence until born of the Virgin Mary; and that, being a man like ourselves, though endowed with a large portion of the divine wisdom, the only objects of his mission were to teach the efficacy of repentance without an atonement.

ment, as a medium of the divine favour—to exhibit an example for our imitation—to seal his doctrine with his blood—and, in his resurrection from the dead, to indicate the certainty of our resurrection at the last day. The *simple humanity* of Christ, which forms a principal article of their creed, is founded on passages of Scripture, where the Messiah is spoken of as a MAN, particularly the following:—Acts ii. 22. *Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a MAN approved of God among you, &c.*—Acts xvii. 31. *Because he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that MAN, whom he hath ordained, &c.*—1 Tim. ii. v. *There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the MAN Christ Jesus.*—At the same time it must be acknowledged, that neither the Trinitarian, nor Sabellian, nor Arian deny his humanity; though they do not hold it in that exclusive and simple sense of the word, for which the Socinian contends. On this account it is, that the Socinians have received, on some occasions, the appellation of *Humanitarians*.

Between ancient and modern Socinians, however, a considerable difference obtains. The miraculous conception, and the worship of Christ, both allowed by Socinus, are rejected by most of the modern Socinians. Dr. Priestley distinguished himself in a controversy on this subject with Dr. Horseley, the present Bishop of Rochester. Dr. Priestley had published his two principal theological works; the one to prove the first Christians Unitarians, entitled, *The History of Early Opinions*; the other, to account for the origin and spread of what is commonly called the orthodox doctrine, entitled, *A His-*

*tory of the Corruptions of Christianity.* On one or both of these publications, the Bishop severely animadverted; and to these animadversions Dr. Priestley made several spirited replies.

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## UNITARIANS.

BUT the Socinians have appropriated to themselves the appellation of *Unitarians* ;\* and by this name they are now more generally distinguished. Though to this appellation they have no *exclusive* claim, yet it is somewhat more correctly descriptive of their religious tenets than that of Socinians, since they renounce many of the opinions of Socinus. The Arians, if not the Trinitarians, are equally strenuous for the divine Unity. See Lindsey's *Historical View of Unitarianism*, Dr. Toulmin's *Life of Socinus*, Hopton Hayne's *Scripture Account of*

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\* We do not answer to that name [Socinians], nor do we approve of being distinguished by it. In the first place, because the doctrine we hold is not borrowed from Socinus, but is known, and universally allowed, to have been coeval with the Apostles. And, further, we differ very materially from the opinions of that very great and good man, and his immediate followers, who strangely imagined that Christ, though a human being, was advanced by God to the government of the whole created universe, and was the proper object of religious worship. We call ourselves Unitarians, or, to distinguish ourselves from other Christians who assumed that name, "Proper" or "Original Unitarians;" and we consider ourselves as entitled to this distinction from prescription, from the reason of the thing, and now from the custom of the language.—*Belsham.*



*the Attributes and Worship of God, and of the Character and Offices of Jesus Christ*, and Mr. Belsham's *Answer to Mr. Wilberforce*, where the modern Socinian tenets are stated and defended with ability.

The Trinitarians, Arians, and Socinians, have also differed greatly respecting the *personality* of the Holy Spirit. Much has been said on both sides of this intricate and controverted question. Dr. Lardner's *Letter on the Logos* may be consulted, and also Mr. Marsom's little piece, entitled, *the Impersonality of the Holy Ghost*, published in 1787. In *Doddridge's Lectures* much information is given respecting this and almost every other article of the Christian faith. Dr. Kippis, not long before his death, published an edition of this valuable work, with considerable additions and improvements. The private Christian as well as the theological student, will derive an extensive knowledge from the attentive perusal of it.

A note added to this publication by Dr. Kippis, and applicable to this *first* division of religious opinions, is of so excellent a nature, that I am tempted to transcribe it. "When it is considered, how extremely difficult many questions in themselves are, and what different conclusions have been drawn concerning them by men of the profoundest knowledge and deepest reflection, there is a *modest scepticism*, which it will become young students to preserve, till times shall have given them the opportunity of wider inquiry and larger observation. This remark would not have been made, if instances had not occurred of youth who have eagerly, and even arrogantly adopted an hypothesis on one side or the other, without suffi-

ently exercising that patience of thinking, and that slow progress of examination, which are likely to be the most favourable to the acquisition of truth.”

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The following remarks, chiefly extracted from an able Review of the Socinian or Unitarian Controversy in the Religious Instructor, January 1816, will form no improper accompaniment :—

“ As God has endowed us with the faculty of reason, and as this faculty is the great instrument to be employed in intellectual and moral inquiry, we may assume it as a first principle, that this faculty is and ought to be employed in matters of religion. In regard to what is commonly termed natural religion, we are required to employ our rational powers in collecting facts and tracing appearances in the universe, so as to deduce from them the existence and attributes of God, and the truths obviously connected with these. But in the very idea of revelation is implied this plain but fundamental truth, that the mind of man is incompetent, by the exercise of its unassisted powers, to explore the path of truth and duty for itself. On this fact is grounded the necessity and advantage of a revelation from God ; and as soon as you set it aside, you establish a principle adverse to the very idea of revelation in general. The enemies of revelation, and of its essential features, have the boldness to maintain, that this is giving up the use of reason ! Nothing can be more unjust, either in a moral or philosophical view. It is true we set aside—our avowed aim is to set aside the pretensions of natural reason to the character and office of supreme judge, or umpire, in mat-

ters of revelation. What is the avowed design and object of a written revelation? Is it not the annunciation from God of truths to be received, and precepts to be practised. The supposition involved in this design is, that these truths and precepts come from God, are stamped with all the authority of Heaven, and are binding on our faith and practice so long as we acknowledge the infallibility of God. If every man is at liberty to try the dictates of revelation at the bar of his own reason, and if no man is obliged to receive them unless they appear to harmonize with the impressions and convictions of his own mind, it follows, that one may set aside one part of revelation, a second may set aside another part, and a third may annihilate the whole with impunity. If the dictates of revelation are to be judged of by reason, then reason is the guide and arbiter of revelation; and the high claims of Christianity, as a message from God, demanding reasonable submission and obedience, are literally exploded.

It is said that a revelation cannot bind us to assent to what is clearly contrary to the first principles of reason, or plainly inconsistent with pure morality. We agree; but we beg leave to add, that the very supposition of the possibility of such a case ought not to be admitted. It is contrary to all our ideas of God or of reason, to imagine that a revelation, ascertained to be from heaven, *can* contain what is clearly inconsistent with common sense or morality. A thing may be *above* reason, and yet by no means contrary to it. I cannot comprehend how the simple principle of gravitation is subservient to every revolution, and to every

purpose in the physical system—the thing is above or beyond my reason, but it is not also contrary to its dictates. The legitimate use of reason in matters of revelation is two-fold ; to ascertain the evidence on which it rests, and to determine the import of the revelation itself. In executing the first of these duties, it proceeds according to the same method which sound philosophy warrants as right and proper in every subject of human inquiry—in the second, it ought to proceed in substantially in the same way. God has committed his will to writing, and has conveyed it to us through the instrumentality of men, speaking in the ordinary language of men. We have no reason to suppose that different rules of interpretation are to be adopted. As, then, we understand a man when he speaks to us according to the plain grammatical construction of his words, and as we adopt the ideas of a written composition on exactly the same principle, so the truths and precepts of a written revelation must unquestionably be interpreted and received according to the first principles of grammatical analysis adopted in all other instances. Having availed ourselves of every means to ascertain the sense of the writer, and having, as we think, ascertained it, nothing more remains for us than to yield submission to his dictates, receiving them with sincerity, and applying them to their practical ends. Reason has now performed its office. Faith succeeds, and obedience is the ultimate consequence. Faith may be thus said to be founded on reason, because it is the result of a rational and serious investigation. There is no inconsistency or opposition between reason and faith, only reason must keep its ap-

propriate place, and not aim at measuring the depths of infinite wisdom by the line of its shallow apprehensions. He acts the irrational part who first receives a revelation, and then sets about estimating the value and obligation of its various parts—that man only acts the rational and wise part, who first ascertains the claims of Christianity as divine, and then bends submissively to its dictates, as to the oracles of God.”

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## II.

### OPINIONS RESPECTING THE MEANS AND MEASURE OF GOD'S FAVOUR.

HAVING ascertained the person of Christ—whether he be the *eternal God*—or an *Angel*—having an existence previous to his being born of the Virgin Mary—or a *mere Man*, under the guidance of inspiration—Christians next proceed to consider the *extent* of the blessings of the gospel, and the *manner* in which they have been conveyed to us. This circumstance also, has been the source of endless contentions. Peace and charity have been not unfrequently lost in the discussion of the subject. Even the Methodists themselves split into two great parties concerning it; and the controversy between their respective leaders has scarcely subsided. We shall attempt the delineation of this class of opinions with brevity

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CALVINISTS.

## LIFE OF CALVIN.

JOHN CALVIN, or CAUVIN, was born on the 10th of July 1509, at Noyon, in Piccardy, of respectable, but not opulent parents. He was educated for the Romish church, in which he officiated a short time as curate, but never received regular ordination. Having acquired some correct views of Christianity, from a careful perusal of the Scriptures, and the instructions of a relative, he resigned the living, and attached himself to the profession of the law; in which he attained to high eminence, particularly as a civilian. He did not, however, give up the study of divinity, but continued occasionally to preach in the country till his twenty-third year, when, having gone to Paris, he abandoned every secular pursuit, and consecrated himself to the service of God. Immediately his sufferings began. His friend, Nicolas Cop, rector of the University of Paris, being accused of heresy, was obliged to flee the city, and himself, saved only from persecution by the interposition of the Queen of Navarre, retired to Saintonge.

In this retreat he wrote some "Short Christian Exhortations" to excite the people to inquire after truth. He returned to Paris in 1534; but Francis I. having committed eight of the reformed to the flames, and declared he would not even spare his own children if found heretics, Calvin quitted the kingdom, and went to Basil, in Switzerland. There he first published his celebrated *Institutions*, to rescue the character of himself and fellow

sufferers from the calumnies by which Francis endeavoured to excuse his cruelty. The dedication to that monarch has been universally admired for the beauty of its language and the boldness of its sentiments. About this time many parts of Italy began to show symptoms of attachment to the Reformation, and the Duchess of Ferrara, daughter of Louis XIII. a woman of distinguished accomplishments and exemplary piety, was considered a patroness of the Protestants. To her court Calvin repaired, and was graciously received ; but the Inquisition soon got notice of his arrival, and he was forced to leave her protection, but not before he had secured her esteem. Returning to Basil, he was under the necessity of going by Geneva, and, at the urgent entreaty of Farel, accepted of an invitation of the consistory and magistracy to become their professor of divinity ; while, with the consent of the people, he at the same time undertook a ministerial charge.

Next year [1537] he succeeded, with the help of his colleagues, in causing the senate and people openly abjure the Church of Rome, and swear to a summary of doctrine and discipline which recognized the Presbyterian form of church government ; but he could not easily induce them to change their principles and habits. A majority retained the love and practice of their former immoralities ; and as Calvin applied to the civil authorities to aid the efforts of the church in repressing them, he and his colleagues drew down upon themselves the resentment and revenge of the vicious and refractory, who could not endure the vigilance of such pastors, and at length procured an order from the council for the expul-

sion of Calvin and Farel from Geneva. When the sentence was intimated to Calvin, he gravely remarked :—  
 “ Truly, if I had served man, I would have had a poor reward ; but it is well that I have served a Master who never forgets to pay his servants all that he has promised.”

Thence Calvin retired to Strasburg, where he was appointed professor of theology, and pastor of a French church ; and, in 1541, was delegated by the divines of that city to attend the diet convoked to meet at Worms, and afterwards at Ratisbonne, for settling the religious differences which had arisen in Germany. Here he met with Melancthon, who was highly delighted with him.

Repenting of their former unjust conduct, the Genevese now anxiously solicited Calvin to return ; and, in May 1540, having obtained an honourable release from his other engagements, he re-entered that city amid the acclamations of the inhabitants. His first care was the reformation of public morals, for the preservation of which he procured a semi-ecclesiastical police to be established ; reprobated by some as tyrannical and severe, and praised by others as wholesome and efficacious. His own personal labours was astonishing ; he preached or lectured nearly every day, attended almost every public meeting, met with his congregation every Friday, superintended the affairs of the French Protestant churches, produced as many works as would have occupied the entire time of other men ; yet was much engaged in the civil business of the republic, being consulted by the magistrates in every case of difficulty. The deference shewn to his opinions, and the respect paid to his per-



sonal character, rose in proportion to the obliquy and ill treatment he had formerly endured.

He met and combated almost every error of his day ; nor were his views of doctrine and discipline confined to the narrow precincts of Geneva. He established a seminary, from which he hoped the few which he considered as most accordant with apostolic purity would emanate through every Protestant country. The case of Servetus has been already noticed [page     ]. After which, Calvin lived to see and deplore the application of fire and faggot to his own friends, as heretics, in Paris—a severe rebuke for his concurrence in the burning of the Socinian. He died 24th May 1564. The character of Calvin stood high with his contemporaries ; his enemies bore involuntary testimony to his intellectual might, by returning heaven solemn thanks for their deliverance, upon a premature report of his death. His name distinguishing so large a denomination of Christians, evinces the affectionate veneration of his friends ; and Scaliger, seldom guilty of exaggerated praise, pronounced him the most learned man in Europe, and the most exalted personage that had appeared since the days of the apostles.

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The *Calvinist* adheres to the doctrines which Calvin taught at Geneva, about 1540. The tenets of Calvinism are predestination, original sin, particular redemption, irresistible grace, and the perseverance of the saints. These, in the learned world, are termed *the five points* ; and frequent have been the controversies agitated respecting them. As the Calvinists differ among themselves in the explication of these tenets, it would be dif-

ficult to give a specific account of them. Generally speaking, however, they comprehend the following propositions :—1st, That God has chosen a certain number in Christ to everlasting glory, before the foundation of the world, according to his immutable purpose, and of his free grace and love, without the least fore-sight of any reference to faith, good works, or any conditions performed by the creature; and that the rest of mankind he was pleased to pass by, and ordain them to dishonour and wrath for their sins, to the praise of his vindictive justice. 2dly, That Jesus Christ by his death and sufferings, made an atonement only for the sins of the elect. 3dly, That mankind are totally depraved in consequence of the fall; and, by virtue of Adam's being their public head, the guilt of his sin was imputed, and a corrupt nature conveyed to all his posterity, from which proceed all actual transgressions; and that by sin we are made subject to death, and all miseries, temporal, spiritual, and eternal. 4thly, That all whom God has *predestinated* to life he is pleased in his appointed time effectually to call by his word and Spirit out of that state of sin and death in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ. And, 5thly, That those whom God has effectually called and sanctified by his Spirit shall never finally fall from a state of grace. Some have supposed that the Trinity was one of these five points; but this is a mistake, since both the Calvinists and Arminians, who formed the synod of Dort (where this phrase, *five points*, originated) were on the article of the Trinity generally agreed. The most prominent feature of this

system is the election of some, and the reprobation of others, from all eternity.

The Calvinists found their sentiments of election on the expressions of the Saviour, respecting his having *chosen* his disciples *out of the world*; and more particularly on certain terms used by the apostle Paul, in his *Epistle to the Romans*. To the Epistolatory writings, indeed, they more frequently refer than to any other part of the New Testament. The chief advantage of this system, in the opinion of its advocates is, to produce in us a *most reverential awe* when we look up to God, and the *profoundest humility* when we look down upon ourselves.

To the Calvinists also belong more particularly the doctrine of an atonement, or that Christ, by his death, made satisfaction to the divine justice for the elect, appeasing the anger of the Divine Being, and effecting on his part a reconciliation. Thus Jesus Christ had the sin of the elect laid upon him,\* and in this sense, Luther said that JESUS CHRIST, was the *greatest sinner* in the world!!! This doctrine, however, is differently explained by their divines, and some consider it (with the Arians and Sabellians) as simply a medium through which God has been pleased to exercise mercy towards the penitent. See Mr. Fuller's publication, entitled, *The Calvinistic and Socinian Systems compared*,† which has been admired by

\* As prophetically spoken, Is. liii. v. 4. "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."

† Having referred to this publication, it may be proper to observe, that it treats of the Calvinistic system, and endeavours to defend it from the

some of the Calvinists, and condemned by others of them, as not coming up to the *full standard* of orthodoxy.

But to ascertain the real sentiments of this body of Christians, recourse should be had to the Assembly's Catechism, which is taught their children, and may therefore be supposed to contain a just account of their religious opinions.

absurdities and impieties with which it has been charged in the writings of modern Socinians. Accordingly Dr. Toulmin and Mr. Kentish have come forward and bestowed upon it some animadversions, to which their antagonist has replied. Dr. Priestley and Mr. Belsham, indeed, against whom Mr. F.'s criticisms are chiefly directed, have treated it in a different manner. The former has not deemed it worthy of notice; the latter mentions it in his reply to Mr. Wilberforce, with great contempt. He there remarks, that the amount of its boasted argument is this—"We Calvinists being *much better Christians* than you Socinians, our doctrine *must* be true!" So very different and even contradictory are the estimates made of mere controversial publications. Dr. Toulmin published a *second* and enlarged edition of his piece against it, to which Mr. Fuller replied.



The full title of Mr. Fuller's work is, "The Calvinistic and Socinian Systems compared AS TO THEIR MORAL TENDENCY," and is by no means such a performance as either Doctor Priestley or Mr. Belsham were entitled to treat with disdain. It is an attempt, and has generally been considered a successful one, to bring the two systems to that which is the only true and legitimate test in religious affairs, and that from which the Socinians ought to be the last to shrink, seeing they boast of their tenets as embodying the purest morality of the Gospel, and their representation of Christianity as the only one which inculcates and enforces them in a rational way. Now, as the advocates of both systems allow that one grand end of Christianity is to produce good morals, certainly the question which of them actually does produce them, and that most uniformly and abundantly, is a question not to be answered by a sneer; and if Mr. Fuller have established that the Calvinists are much better moralists, *i. e.* Christians, than the Socinians, it follows of course that their doctrine is the true exhibition of Christianity—men do not gather figs of thistles—a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit.

To this it would not be improper to add the Westminster Confession of Faith, and Calvin's Institutes.

Calvinists form no particular distinct society of Christians, but are found among various bodies which range under different denominations, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, and Independents. It was once the glory of Geneva, where it is now unfortunately superseded by a "rational" system more nearly allied to Deism. It is the creed of the Established Church of Scotland, and of the Seceders; is the doctrine of the thirty-nine articles of the Church of England; is acknowledged by the Dutch legalized churches; and by the generality of the Presbyterians in America. The Synod of Ulster in Ireland lately separated upon this point—part adhering to the confession they had subscribed, and a minority embracing a new, but not well defined faith.

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## SUBLAPSARIANS AND SUPRALAPSARIANS.

AMONG the refinements of Calvinism are to be ranked the distinctions of the *Sublapsarians* and *Supralapsarians*. The Sublapsarians assert, that God had only permitted the first man to fall into transgression, without absolutely pre-determining his fall: whereas the Supralapsarians maintain, that God had from all eternity decreed the transgressions of Adam, in such a manner that

our first parents could not possibly avoid this fatal event. Dr. Doddridge in his Lectures, has thus stated these abstruse distinctions:—"The *Supralapsarian* and *Sublapsarian* schemes agree in asserting the doctrine of predestination, but with this difference, that the *former* supposes that God intended to glorify his justice in the condemnation of some, as well as his mercy in the salvation of others, and for that purpose decreed that *Adam* should necessarily fall, and by that fall bring himself and all his offspring into a state of everlasting condemnation: the *latter* scheme supposes that the decree of predestination regards man as fallen by an abuse of that freedom which Adam had, into a state in which all were to be left to necessary and unavoidable ruin, who were not exempted from it by predestination." Recent divines, who have gone to the height of *Supralapsarians*, are Mr. *Brine* and Dr. *Gill*. Were any thing more necessary to elucidate this curious subject, it might be added—that the term *Supralapsarians* is derived from two Latin words, *supra* above, and *lapsus* the fall; and the term *Sublapsarians*, from *sub* below or after, and *lapsus* the fall.

Calvin, in his *Institutes*, states and defends at large, the principles of his system. It is written in elegant Latin, is dedicated to Francis the First, King of France, and the dedication has been admired for its boldness and magnanimity.

For a defence of Calvinism, see *Edwards on the Will*, *Brine's Tracts*. Dr. *Gill's Cause of God and Truth*, and *Toplady's Historic Proof of the Calvinism of the Church of England*.

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## ARMINIANS.

### LIFE OF ARMINIUS.

JAMES ARMINIUS was born in the year 1560, at Oude-water, in Holland; and, having lost his father in infancy, was educated by a priest, said to have belonged to the church of Rome, though strongly attached to Protestant principles. The name of this generous man, of whom he was also soon deprived, has not been preserved. Rodolphus Snellius, a countryman of his own, enabled him to pursue his studies, first at Utrecht, and next at Marpurg. While at the latter place, and only in his fifteenth year, he heard that the Spaniards had sacked his native town; and, anxious to ascertain the truth of the afflicting report, he travelled on foot the long distance under the pressure of indigence, approaching to want. His most gloomy anticipations he found exceeded on his arrival; his mother, sister, and brother, with nearly the whole inhabitants, had been mercilessly butchered; and he turned with horror from the dismal scene, to seek some alleviation to his lacerated feelings in the prosecution of his studies. An University having been lately founded at Leyden, he went thither; and his character while there procured him the countenance of the magistrates of Amsterdam, who sent him [1582] at their own expense to complete his education at Geneva, where he attended the lectures of Theodore Beza. Getting involved in a dispute with some of the professors respect-

ing the merits of Ramus and Aristotle, he retired to Basil, in Switzerland, and read lectures there himself with so much applause, that he had the honour of declining a doctor's degree from the faculty of divinity. This, perhaps, coupled with a journey he not long after took into Italy to hear the lectures of Zarabella at Padua, alienated from him the affections of his Dutch patrons, and occasioned a report that he had become favourite to the Popish tenets, associated with the Jesuits, and had even abjured Protestantism; nor was it without considerable difficulty that he regained the good opinion of the people and magistrates of Amsterdam. His prudence and eloquence, however, overcame the current calumny, and he was appointed a minister in that city about the year 1588.

Nearly about the same time his sentiments underwent an important revolution—hitherto he had supported the creed of Calvin—and the cause which occasioned it, though not unexampled, is rather uncommon: trained in the Calvinistic school, and esteemed one of the ablest scholars, he was pitched upon by the professor of divinity at Franeker to answer a production in which some of the ministers of Delft had oppugned the supra-lapsarian scheme of predestination: but the result of his examination was, that he became a convert to the doctrine he was called to oppose, and even carried it farther than the persons he was employed to refute. He contended that Christ died for all men without exception, and that those who are chosen to eternal life are such as God foresaw would believe and obey the Gospel: and he denied as unscriptural the assertion of absolute decrees and



personal election. The stricter Calvinists were offended, as might naturally be expected, at this change in the sentiments of Arminius; and, according to the custom of the times, wished to convince him of his error by a little civil coercion; but the Magistrates of Amsterdam were friendly, and saved him from the threatened injurious treatment. In 1603, he was invited to succeed Francis Junius as Professor of Divinity at Leyden; and in that important station he propagated his tenets with much success among the students. His colleague, Francis Gomar, alarmed at the progress of his heterodoxical tenets, strenuously opposed them; and the disputations in the University became so violent, that the states interfered, and appointed conferences, which had the usual effect of confirming the disputants in their respective opinions, and increasing their mutual zeal and animosity. The controversy speedily spread over all Holland, and Arminius was repeatedly summoned to the Hague to give an account of his doctrine; but ere the battle had reached the hottest, Arminius was removed from the field of contest, and died with much composure, October 19, 1609.



The *Arminian* favours the tenets of Arminius, the disciple of Beza, and latterly an eminent professor of divinity at Leyden, who flourished about the year 1600. Thinking the doctrine of Calvin with regard to free-will, predestination, and grace, directly contrary to the mild and amiable perfections of the Deity, he began to express his doubts concerning them in the year 1591; and upon further inquiry, adopted sentiments more nearly resem-

bling those of the Lutherans than of the Calvinists. After his appointment to the theological chair at Leyden, he thought it his duty to avow and vindicate the principles which he had embraced; and the freedom with which he published and defended them, exposed him to the resentment of those that adhered to the theological system of Geneva. The controversy thus begun in the life-time of Arminius, ended not with his death, and for a long time roused the violence of contending passions.\*

His tenets include the five following propositions: 1st, That God has not fixed the future state of mankind by an absolute unconditional decree; but determined from all eternity, to bestow salvation on those whom he foresaw would persevere to the end in their faith in Jesus Christ, and to inflict punishment on those who should continue in their unbelief, and resist to the end his divine assistance. 2dly, That Jesus Christ, by his death and sufferings, made an atonement for the sins of all mankind in general, and of every individual in particular; that however none but those who believe in him can be partakers of this divine benefit. 3dly, That mankind are not totally depraved, and that depravity does not come upon them by virtue of Adam's being their public head, but that mortality and natural evil only are the direct consequences of his sin to posterity. 4thly, That there is no such thing as irresistible grace, in the conversion of sinners. And, 5thly, That those who are united to

\* Arminius's motto was a remarkable one—" *A good conscience is a paradise!*"

Christ by faith, may fall from their faith, and forfeit finally their state of grace.

Thus the followers of Arminius believe that God, having an *equal* regard for all his creatures, sent his Son to die for the sins of the *whole world*; that men have the power of doing the will of God, otherwise they are not the proper subjects of approbation and condemnation; and that, in this present imperfect state, believers, if not peculiarly vigilant, may, through the force of temptation, fall from grace, and sink into final perdition. The Arminians found their sentiments on the expressions of our SAVIOUR respecting his *willingness* to save *all* that come unto him; especially on his pathetic prayer over Jerusalem—his Sermon on the mount, and above all on his delineation of the process of the last day, where the salvation of men is not said to have been procured by any *decree*, but because they had done *the will of their Father, who is in heaven*. This last argument they deem decisive; because it cannot be supposed that Jesus, in the account of the judgment day, would have deceived them. They also say, the terms in the *Romans* respecting election, are applicable only to the state of the Jews *as a body*, without a reference to the religious condition of individuals, either in the present or future world.

Whitby, the celebrated commentator, and who was originally a *Calvinist*, has written a large and elaborate defence of Arminianism; and the reader should consult Dr. Taylor's *Key to the Epistle to the Romans*, which has been much admired, on the subject. Since the days of Laud (who was Archbishop of Canterbury in the reign of Charles the First) by far the majority of the English

clergy have taken this side of the question. Bishop Burnet has given a full account of the opinions of this sect, in his *Exposition* of the Seventeenth Article.

In the last century disputes ran very high in Holland between the Calvinists and the Arminians. On each side considerable talents and learning were displayed; but some shamefully called in the interference of the civil power, and thus terminated a controversy, which for some years had agitated the religious world. For this purpose the famous synod of Dort was held, 1618, and a curious account of its proceedings may be seen in a series of letters written by the ever-memorable John Hales, who was present on the occasion. This synod was succeeded by a severe and scandalous persecution of the Arminians. The respectable Barneveldt lost his head on a scaffold, and the learned Grotius, condemned to perpetual imprisonment, fled and took refuge in France. The storm, however, some time after abated, and Episcopius, an Arminian minister, opened a seminary in Amsterdam, which produced some able divines and excellent scholars.

The principal Arminian writers are Episcopius, Vorsius, Grotius, Limborch, Le Clerc, Wetstein, not to mention many others of modern times, particularly Mr. John Wesley in his *Arminian Magazine*, and Mr. Fellowes in his *Religion without Cant*, and in his elegant work, entitled, *Christian Philosophy*.

The Arminians are sometimes called the Remonstrants, because they, in 1611, presented a REMONSTRANCE to the States General, wherein they pathetically state their grievances, and pray for relief. See an interesting work, entitled, *An Abridgement of Gerrard Brandt's*

History of the Reformation in the Low Countries, 2 vols. 8vo.



## BAXTERIANS.

LIFE OF RICHARD BAXTER.

RICHARD BAXTER was born at Rowton, Shropshire, 12th November, A. D. 1615. He gave early indications of a devout disposition, and an inclination for study. He was blessed with pious parents; and his father carefully instructed him in the principles of Christianity; but he was unfortunate in his first teachers, who were neither remarkable for learning nor morals. Afterwards, however, under Mr. Owen, at Wroxeter free school, he made greater progress, which was much promoted by Mr. Wickstead, chaplain to the council at Ludlow, who allowed him the use of an excellent library. Mr. Garbett, minister of Wroxeter, carried him through a course of philosophy. When about eighteen years of age [1633], he was persuaded to go to court, and was recommended to Sir Henry Herbert, Master of the Rolls; but the employment was little suited to his taste, and in less than a month he returned to his studies with greater avidity than ever. Four years after this he was appointed master of the free school at Dudley; and in the same year received orders from Dr. Thornborough, Bishop of Worcester. In his fourteenth year he had been seized

with the small-pox, and, ere he recovered from that malady, was attacked with a complication of disorders, which, aided by the multiplicity of cures that were prescribed and he followed, rendered him a valetudinarian during the remainder of his life. Meanwhile, the near prospect of death caused him be doubly anxious to recommend to his fellow sinners that religion of which he felt the importance in such circumstances; and he ever, from his state of health, had an earnest solemnity in his sermons, considering himself constantly as standing on the verge of eternity, and as a dying man addressing dying men. He was settled, 1640, as stated preacher at Kidderminster, an ignorant and dissolute place, where he at first met with violent opposition, till, by his unwearied diligence in the discharge of his duty, he occasioned a considerable reformation in the place. When the civil war commenced, he, although loyal from principle, supported the Parliament, and was in consequence exposed to considerable vicissitude. What chiefly grieved him, was the strong tendency in these times of strong excitement for professors of religion to split into parties and sects. Among the other grievances of these evil days, the government, with a folly neither singular nor matchless, endeavoured to force all the religious part of the community to adhere not only to an establishment about which they had some doubts, but to hear a set of careless incapable clergy, about which they had none: the natural consequence was, that the people ran to an opposite extreme, and were apt to under-rate and despise the regular order of the ministry. To remedy, or at least to contend with this evil, Baxter betook himself to

the army, and debated and disputed against the liberty, or, as he styled it, the licentiousness of the sects, but to little purpose, till an opportune bleeding at the nose [1647] reduced him to a state of great weakness, and obliged him to leave the ungrateful field.

Having recovered, under the kind nursing of the lady of Sir Thomas Rowe, he returned to Kidderminster, where he laboured for fourteen years with the most exemplary diligence and most astonishing success; so that, as there was hardly a family in which the worship of God was before this, in the end of that time there was scarcely a family in which it was not. He now openly differed from the measures of rigid Presbyterians; and though he had taken the covenant himself, dissuaded others from doing so. He preached against Cromwell's usurpation; yet he allowed that he had done more good to the cause of religion than any king that ever sat upon the throne; and laboured to reconcile the different parties by opposing them all. He wished to be a mediator of extreme opposers, and pitched his tabernacle on the debateable ground between them; but although both respected his talents and acknowledged his integrity, he only got involved with each in his turn, and expatiated in the field of controversy alternately with either. He espoused the cause of Charles II. recommended loyalty to the rump parliament, and preached a sermon at St. Pauls on Monk's success. After the Restoration, he was appointed one of the king's chaplains in ordinary, had several private interviews with him, and was always treated by him with respect; but he could obtain no favourable treatment for the non-conformists from that deceitful prince. He had

the honour, however, of refusing a bishoprick, and of suffering along with them. He anxiously wished to be allowed to resume his labours at Kidderminster, but he was too obnoxious to the high church party for his exemplary piety and assiduous performance of his parochial ministrations. He preached occasionally in London and the neighbourhood, till the passing of the act against conventicles, 1662. During his retirement he married, which proved a great advantage in the seasons of suffering he endured in these persecuting times, his wife taking the management of the frequent removals to which he was subjected in consequence of his being unceasingly pursued by the high church persecutors. He was a companion of the non-conformists in all their trials, being repeatedly imprisoned, and frequently fined; yet nothing could deter him from the discharge of his duty; in health or sickness his labours were incessant. In the reign of James II. he was brought before the infamous Jeffries, and, although old and infirm, and blameless, except in the matter of his religion, the brutal treatment he experienced on his trial stands recorded, to the disgrace even of that unjust judge. He died in 1691, at the age of 76.

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The *Baxterian* strikes into a middle path, between Arminianism and Calvinism, and thus endeavours to unite both schemes. With the Calvinist, he professes to believe that a certain number, determined upon in the divine councils, will be infallibly saved; and with the Arminian he joins in rejecting the doctrine of reprobation as absurd and impious; admits that Christ, in a certain sense, died for all, and supposes that such a portion of



grace is allotted to *every* man, as renders it his own fault if he doth not attain to eternal life. This conciliatory system was espoused by the famous non-conformist Richard Baxter, who lived in the last century, and who was equally celebrated for the acuteness of his controversial talents, and the utility of his practical writings. Hence came the term Baxterians, among whom are generally ranked both Watts and Doddridge. In the scale of religious sentiment, Baxterianism seems to be, with respect to the subject of the divine favour, what Arianism is with respect to the person of Christ. It appears to have been considered by some pious persons as a safe middle way between two extremes. Baxter was an extraordinary character in the religious world. He wrote above 120 books, and had above 60 written against him. Though he was of a very metaphysical genius, and consequently sometimes made a distinction without a difference, yet the great object of most of his productions was peace and amity. Accordingly his religious system was formed not to inflame the passions and widen the breaches, but to heal those wounds of the Christian Church, under which she had long languished.\*

\* For the particular detail given of the Calvinistic and Arminian sentiments, see a brief but useful history of the Christian church. in 2 vols. by Dr. Gregory. The best and amplest ecclesiastical history is Mosheim's, in 6 vols, translated from the Latin into English, by Dr. Maelaine, of the Hague, who has enriched it with many valuable notes.

## ANTINOMIANS.

THE *Antinomian* derives his name from two Greek words, *αντι*, against, and *νομος*, a law ; his favourite tenet being, that the law is not a rule of life to believers. It is not easy to ascertain what he means by this position. But he seems to carry the doctrine of the imputed righteousness of Christ, and of salvation by faith without works, to such lengths as to injure, if not wholly destroy, the very obligation to moral obedience. Antinomianism may be traced to the period of the Reformation, and its founder was John Agricola, originally a disciple of Luther. The Papists, in their disputes with the Protestants of that day, carried the merit of good works to an extravagant length ; and this induced some of their opponents to run into the opposite extreme. This sect (says the *Encyclopædia*) sprung up in England, during the protectorate of Oliver Cromwell, and extended their system of libertinism much farther than Agricola, the disciple of Luther. Some of their teachers expressly maintained, that as the elect cannot fall from grace, nor forfeit the divine favour, the wicked actions they commit are not really sinful, nor are to be considered as instances of their violation of the divine law, and consequently they have no occasion either to confess their sins or to break them off by repentance. According to them, it is one of the essential and distinctive characters of the elect, that they cannot do any thing displeasing to God, or prohibited by the law. Luther, Rutherford, Sedgwick, Ga-

taker, Witsius, Bull, Williams, &c. have written refutations; whilst Crisp, Richardson, Saltmarsh, put forth defences of the Antinomians; Wisgandus wrote "A Comparison between ancient and modern Antinomians." The late Rev. Mr. Fletcher, Vicar of Madeley, in Shropshire, published *Four Checks to Antinomianism*, which have been much read, and greatly admired.

The term *Antinomian* has been frequently fixed on persons by way of reproach; and therefore many who have been branded with this name have repelled the charge. There are many Antinomians, indeed, of a singular cast in Germany, and other parts of the continent; they condemn the moral law as a rule of life, and yet profess a strict regard for the interests of practical religion. Many persons, however, who reprobate the system of John Calvin, pronounce Antinomianism to be nothing more than *Calvinism run to seed*.\* Speculative sentiments of any kind ought not to be carried to a degree which might endanger even in appearance the sacred cause of morality.

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\* This remark has an appearance of point, but is, in fact, nonsense. A plant can only produce seed which contains its own principles in embryo. The Anti-Calvinist, who emitted this witty saying, meant to convey a totally different idea; he meant to shew that Antinomianism was the fruit, the perfection of Calvinism—than which, nothing can be more untrue. The Calvinist who believes in predestination, believes that God hath predestinated him unto good works, an essential part of the Calvinistic, as of the Apostolic doctrine, too much overlooked by professors of all denominations. Antinomians, like Calvinists, are not confined to any particular sect or party, but are found most plentifully among those who denominate themselves Evangelical, who think that a notional soundness of creed will atone for a little looseness of practice; who, having imbibed what they

## III.

OPINIONS RESPECTING CHURCH GOVERNMENT, AND THE  
ADMINISTRATION OF CEREMONIES.

“ THE extent of Christianity in the world, or all those several kingdoms and countries where the Christian religion is professed and embraced (says Mr. Martin in his *Philological Library*) are, taken together, called *Christendom* ; and this consisteth of many (some more general, some more particular, &c.) different religious societies, which are called *churches*. A Christian church is a society or congregation of men and women, who are called out from the vicious world by the preaching of the Gospel, and are regulated in all the parts of their ritual discipline and articles of faith by the plain rules and prescriptions of the New Testament, [and whose lives are correspondent to their holy professions.]\* The ministers of the Christian church, in its primitive state, were extraordinary or ordinary. The *Extraordinary* were

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call simple views of saving faith, imagine that a clear theoretical understanding of the doctrines of the Gospel is sufficient to entitle a man to the name of a Believer, and to ensure his salvation, provided he abstain from gross immorality, although he indulge in conformity to the respectable or fashionable customs of the world, be as keen an advocate for its maxims of business, and its modes of harmless amusements, as those who seek no better inheritance.

\* The clause within brackets is left out in the later editions of Evans. Query—for what reason ?

chiefly three: 1. *Apostles*, who were delegated by Christ with power and commission to preach the gospel, and work miracles in confirmation thereof among all nations. 2. *Prophets*, who were not such as simply foretold things, but those to whom God was pleased to reveal his more secret counsels and designs, and who related and preached the same to men.\* 3. *Evangelists*, such as were assistants to the apostles in preaching the gospel, and were endued with many extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit, as of languages and interpretations, &c.† But since the establishment of Christianity in the world, these *extraordinary officers* have ceased. The *Ordinary* ministers of the Christian church are principally three: 1. A *Bishop*, who had the oversight of the flock or church of Christ; to him pertained the preaching of the word, and due regulation of the church in faith and manners. And this rule and precedence of the Bishop is called *Episcopacy* no where in the New Testament. 2. *Presbyters* or *Elders*, or *Priests*; these were such as preached the word, and administered the sacraments, and performed all the other sacred functions of the ministry, under the inspection of the Bishop. But it is a controversy, whether the Scripture doth not intend the *same* person or officer by the appellations *Bishop* and *Presbyter*. The power of the *Presbyter* is called Presbytery. 3. *Deacons*; these were such as officiated in that part of the Christian mi-

\* I have never been able to discover this order in the New Testament, nor in any credible church history.

† These were equivalent to missionaries sent out from the churches.

nistry which related to the *poor*, and their business was to take the collections of money made in the church, and to distribute it to the necessities of the poor, and other sacred uses. And their office, properly speaking, is called the *Ministry* or Deaconship. These officers are perpetual in the Christian church.”—After this introductory explanation of THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH, I proceed to the *Opinions respecting church government and the administration of ceremonies.*

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## PAPISTS.\*

THE *Papists* are so denominated from their leading tenet—the infallibility and supremacy of the Pope (in the Latin, *Papa*, signifying father),† which they strenuously maintain. By the *infallibility* of the Pope, is understood, that the Pope cannot err in ecclesiastical matters; and by his *supremacy* is meant his authority over all the churches, and sometimes over all the princes of

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\* This was the denomination by which the adherents of the church of Rome were distinguished by the first reformers, who would not allow that they were entitled to the name of Christians, and adopted in the law of this country. They, however, considering it a title of reproach, the term Roman Catholic has been substituted by courtesy.

† From the Greek rather. It was given indiscriminately in the first ages of Christianity to all Bishops, and in the East to all ecclesiastics, till Gregory VII. ordered it to be reserved to the Bishop of Rome alone. He reigned from 1073 to 1085.

the earth. This enormous power has been for some time diminishing, and the Roman Catholics at present are much divided on the subject. Some allow the Pope's infallibility and supremacy in their full extent; others acknowledge them in part; and a third wholly reject them. The late Father O'Leary's Tracts also may be consulted, who had a dispute on Popery with the Rev. John Wesley. They also profess to believe, 1. In seven sacraments—baptism, confirmation, the eucharist, penance, extreme unction, or the anointing the sick in the prospect of death, orders, and matrimony. With respect to the Eucharist, or Lord's Supper, they hold the doctrine of *transubstantiation*, or that the bread and wine are changed into the *body and blood* of Christ; the paying divine worship to the host, or consecrated wafer, and the allowing communion only in one kind, viz. bread, to the laity.\* 2. In works of supererogation, or that the

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\* The following is the Tridentine creed relative to the mass, which, as forming one of the fundamental articles of the Romish faith, deserves especial notice; it was that which the reformers assailed with their heaviest artillery, because they considered the belief of it entirely subversive, not only of the real design of the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, but of the foundation of the Christian religion, and incompatible with any scriptural hope of salvation.—Art. XV. "I profess likewise, that in the mass there is offered to God a true, proper, and propitiatory sacrifice for the living and the dead; and that in the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist there is truly, really, and substantially the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ; and that there is made a conversion of the whole substance of the bread into the body and of the whole substance of the wine into the blood, which conversion the Catholic church calls *transubstantiation*. XVIII. I also confess, that under either kind alone Christ, whole and entire, and a true sacrament, is received." This is an article which no Roman Catholic dare dispute or set aside without

good works of saints are meritorious enough to supply the deficiency of others. 3. In the celibacy, or single life of the clergy. 4. In the worship of images and sacred relics. And, 5. In the celebration of divine service in an unknown tongue. Many, however, of the adherents of Popery, in the present day, reject some of the above tenets; and more especially renouncing the supremacy of the Pope, distinguish themselves by the name of Catholics, and sometimes of Catholic Dissenters. The publications of the late Dr. Geddes, on this subject, are worthy of attention. He was a liberal and learned priest among this class of the Roman Catholics, and was for several years engaged in a translation of the Bible under the patronage of Lord Petre.\*

ceasing to be a Roman Catholic in deed, whatever he may be in name; but believing which, he sets aside the only one sacrifice offered without the gates of Jerusalem, and substitutes the adoration of a wafer or a mystical something in opposition, as has been often remarked both to the dictates of sound reason, and to the direct evidence of four out of five senses.

\* There are many good men who, without considering the subject, are willing to allow that the Roman Catholic religion is not the same now that it was in the dark ages; that it is quite harmless, in a civil point of view, and purged of its grosser absurdities, is quite safe in a religious one; but they forget that the boast of the Romish Church is its antiquity, and the unchangeable nature of its tenets, and that although some of its colleges or fraternities—as the Jesuits—may explain away the more obnoxious parts of her creed, the church disavows all explications except those of the Pope or a general council; and the individuals who deny any of the acknowledged credenda of the Roman Catholic church—and in disclaiming her infallibility, they commit one of her mortal sins—ought to withdraw from her communion, and renounce the name when they renounce the principles. All true Roman Catholics maintain that their faith has been, is, and must continue one and the same, and that faith has been solemnly enunciated in the decrees of the council of Trent, the last council



Among the Roman Catholics there are to be found several monastic orders, such as the Augustines, the Benedictines, the Carmelites, the Dominicans, the Franciscans, &c. and also a variety of sects, such as the Jesuits, the Jansenists, the Molinists, and others, some of whom were sects of celebrity. The ingenious Pascal, in his *Provincial Letters*, aimed an effective blow at the order of the Jesuits, and it was abolished in France in 1762, on the supposition that they adopted practices which were inimical to the welfare of their country.

In the council of Trent, held 1549, the tenets of the Papists were reduced into one compact standard, and the summary of Popery, exhibited in Pope Pius's creed, contains the substance of the decrees and canons of this council. The creed is divided into twenty-four articles. The first twelve are expressed in the very words of the creed called the *Nicene*; and the remaining twelve are new articles, truly Romish. See Borrough's View of Popery, taken from the Creed of Pope Pius the VIth, 1735. Father Paul, of Venice, has immortalized himself by a faithful history of the council of Trent; and though himself a Papist, yet he has exposed with freedom the intrigues by which this council was conducted. Bellarmine, an acute Jesuit, and Bossuet, the Bishop of Meaux, are the two most celebrated defenders of Popery. They had also amongst them several eloquent preachers; and the sermons of Massilon, Bourdaloue, and Flechier,

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that was held, or probably ever will be held. The articles in the text are a correct summary of them, so far as they go.

are esteemed models of pulpit eloquence. In this country several penal laws were in force against the Roman Catholics ; but most of them were repealed in the course of the present reign. It was an opposition to the repeal of these law that occasioned the disgraceful riots, which broke out during the month of June, 1780, and threatened the destruction of the metropolis.\*

It is remarkable, that the Papists have had amongst them a Pope, who used to be denominated a Protestant Pope. His name was Ganganelli, and is known to the world under the title of Clement the 14th. His liberality appeared in his actions, and it was his common saying, “ We too often lay aside *charity* to maintain *faith*, without reflecting that if it is not allowed to tolerate men, it is forbidden to hate and persecute those who have unfortunately embraced it.” He died in 1775, not without suspicion of poison. Such a character must be pronounced an honour to the Romish church, and it is to be hoped that there are many individuals of this description to be found in her communion. As to his *letters*, which for the liberality of their sentiments and the elegance of their diction, have been much admired, many entertain doubts of their authenticity. Archbishop Fenelon also was distinguished both for his benevolence and piety.

Here the account of Popery should have ended, had not their doctrine of *Indulgences* deserved particular ex-

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\* All disabilities have now been removed, and they have at last obtained complete emancipation.

plication. The history and form of these indulgences are given us by that eminent historian Dr. Robertson, in his History of Charles the Fifth, and are here transcribed. “According to the doctrine of the Romish church, all the good works of the saints, over and above those which were necessary towards their own justification, are deposited together, with the infinite merits of Jesus Christ, in one inexhaustible treasury. The keys of this were committed to St. Peter, and to his successors the Popes, who may open it at pleasure, and by transferring a portion of this superabundant merit to any particular person for a sum of money, may convey to him either the pardon of his own sins, or a release for any one in whom he is interested, from the pains of purgatory; which indulgences were first invented in the eleventh century, by Urban the Second, as a recompense for those who went in person upon the meritorious enterprize (commonly called the *Crusades*) of conquering the holy land. They were afterwards granted to those who hired a soldier for that purpose; and in process of time were bestowed on such as gave money for accomplishing any pious work enjoined by the Pope. Julius the Second had bestowed indulgences on all who contributed towards building the church of St. Peter, at Rome; and as Leo the Tenth was carrying on that magnificent and expensive fabric, his grant was founded on the same pretence.”

The following is the form of these indulgences:—  
 “May our Lord Jesus Christ have mercy upon thee, and absolve thee by the merits of his most holy passion. And I, by his authority, that of his blessed apostles Peter and

Paul, and of the most holy Pope, granted and committed to me in these parts, do absolve thee, first, from all ecclesiastical censures, in whatever manner they have been incurred, and then from all thy sins, transgressions and excesses, how enormous soever they be, even from such as are reserved for the cognizance of the holy see, and, as far as the keys of the holy church extend, I remit to you all punishment which you deserve in purgatory on their account ; and I restore you to the holy sacraments of the church, to the unity of the faithful, and to that innocence and purity which you possessed at baptism, so that when you die the gates of punishment shall be shut, and the gates of the paradise of delight shall be opened ; and if you shall not die at present, this grace shall remain in full force when you are at the point of death. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”

This was the form of absolution used by Tetzels, a Dominican friar, who, in the sixteenth century, was appointed to sell these indulgences in Germany, which eventually brought about the Reformation.

This article shall conclude with the mention of a curious tract on Popery, lately published, entitled, “ A Modest Apology for the Roman Catholics of Great Britain, addressed to all moderate Protestants, particularly to the Members of both Houses of Parliament.” This piece came from the pen of the late Dr. Geddes, already mentioned, and is written with his usual learning and ingenuity. It is, indeed, a most singular performance, and well worthy attention.

## GREEK CHURCH.

THE *Greek, or Russian Church*, which now spreads itself over the eastern parts of Europe, is very ancient, and bears a considerable resemblance to the church of Rome. Denying, however, the infallibility and supremacy of the Pope, they are in communion with the Patriarch of Constantinople. Amongst other articles of belief, they are distinguished for these three:—1. The rejection of images. 2. The doctrine of consubstantiation, or the union of the body of Christ with the sacramental element. 3. The administration of baptism, by immersing the whole body in water.

The Russian, or Greek church, equals the Latin church in the number of ceremonies and superstitious customs; some of which are thus described in Chantreau's Travels into Russia:—"At the beginning of the year, the king's day is a singular festival, which the Russians call the benediction of waters. On the Neva, then frozen, there is raised for this ceremony a kind of temple, of an octagonal figure, on the top of which is a St. John the Baptist, and the inside is decorated with pictures, representing the baptism of Jesus, his transfiguration, and some other parts of his life. There your attention is drawn to an enormous Holy Ghost, appearing to descend from heaven, a decoration common to all the Greek churches, which introduces the Holy Ghost every where. In the middle of the sanctuary is a square space, where the broken ice leaves a communication with the waters

running below, and the rest is ornamented with rich tapestry. Around this temple there is erected a kind of gallery, which communicates with one of the windows of the imperial palace, at which the empress and her family come out to attend the ceremony, which begins as soon as the regiments of guards have taken post on the river. Then the archbishop, at the sound of the bells, and of the artillery of the fortress, comes out of the palace, and walks in procession, with all his clergy, to the little temple we have just mentioned. When arrived at the place where the ice is broken, he descends, by means of a ladder, to the side of the water. There he dips his cross three or four times, afterwards says some prayers, an orison to the great St Nicholas, and the waters are then thought blessed. The prelate sprinkles the water on the company around him, and on the colours of all the regiments that happen to be at St. Petersburg. After this benediction, the archbishop retires. Then the people crowd towards the hole, by which this prelate has blessed the waters. They drink of them with a holy avidity. Notwithstanding the cold, the mothers plunge their infants, and the old men their heads, into them. Every body makes it a duty to carry away some for the purification of their houses, and curing certain distempers, against which the good Russians pretend this holy water is a powerful specific. While every one proceeds to this useful provision, four popes, who are at the four corners of the sanctuary, sing a kind of litany, in which they rehearse all the titles of the empress, and to which the people answer by these words, *Pameloi-Bog*—May God take pity on her.

“ The Russians have a great number of abstinencies, or fasts, and among the rest four lents.

“ The Greek priests have much more reverence and meditation in their way of going through divine service, than the Latin priests ; and the discipline of their church directs, that when once a priest is at the altar, he must not remove from it during the time he ought to stand there, whatever may happen to him. For instance : we are told, that the prelate Gabriel, at present metropolitan of Novogorod, and Archimandrite to St. Alexander Neuski, being one day engaged in saying mass at St. Petersburg, the house contiguous to the church took fire, and the flames reaching the steeple, Gabriel was warned of the danger he was in, and yet he stirred not, even although he was told a second time, that the bells would not be long in bruising him to atoms. As the cries of the multitude, conjuring him to remove from certain death, made no impression on him, one of his relations leaped towards the altar, and tore him from it. Scarcely was he twenty paces from it, when the steeple fell in with a great crash upon the sanctuary.”

Efforts have been made to join the Greek to the reformed church ; but hitherto they have failed of success. The Rev. Dr. John King published an account of the doctrine, worship, and discipline of the Greek Church in Russia. There are several curious particulars to be found in the *Russian Catechism*, composed by the Czar, and which was published in London, 1725 ; in Robinson's *Ecclesiastical Researches*, and in a work not long ago published, entitled, *Secret Memoirs of the Court of Petersburg*.

That the Reader may form some judgment of the *present* state of the Greek church, the last mentioned work presents us with the following recent fact, translated from the Imperial Gazette, of Petersburg :—

“ Petersburg, 17 Dec. 1798.

“ In 1796, a coffin was found at the convent of Sumovin, in the city of Trotma, in the eparchy of Volgoda, containing a corpse, in the habit of a monk. It had been interred in 1568, yet was in a state of perfect preservation, as were also the garments. From the letters embroidered on them, it was found to be the body of the most memorable Feodose Sumorin, founder and superior of the convent, and who had been acknowledged as a saint during his life, for the miracles he had performed.” It is then stated, that the directing synod had made *a very humble* report on this occasion to his Imperial Majesty. After which follows the Emperor’s ukase or proclamation.

“ We PAUL, &c. having been certified by a special report of the most holy synod, of the discovery that has been made in the convent of Spasso-Sumovin, of the miraculous remains of the most venerable Feodose, which miraculous remains, distinguish themselves by the happy cure of all those who have recourse to them with *entire* confidence : we take the discovery of these holy remains as a *visible sign*, that the Lord hast cast his most gracious eye in the *most distinguished manner* on our reign. For this reason, we offer our fervent prayers and our gratitude to the supreme Dispenser of all things, and charge our *most holy* synod to announce this *memorable discovery*



throughout all our empire, according to the forms prescribed by the *holy* church, and by the *holy* fathers, &c. The 28th September 1798."

This writer immediately adds, that *Paul* has enriched the Russian calendar with a few festivals; for *every* child that he has, gives rise to two new festivals, his birth-day and his name-day; and *Paul* has *nine* children already. From this circumstance, I am tempted to remark, that had *Paul* continued to live, and had the *Empress* proved only half as fruitful as *the lady usually represented in wax-work*, the *three hundred and sixty-five* days of the year would then be converted into *holy days*, and thus would the Greek church have attained to the highest pitch of perfection.

The following anecdote, however, from the same work, and on the subject, almost exceeds credibility:—"I knew a Russian princess, who had always a *large silver crucifix* following her in a separate carriage, and which she usually placed in her bed-chamber. When any thing fortunate had happened to her in the course of the day, and she was satisfied with her admirers, she had lighted candles placed about the crucifix, and said to it in a familiar style—"See, now, as you have been very good to-day, you shall be treated well—you shall have candles all night—I will love you—I will pray to you." If, on the contrary, any thing occurred to vex this lady, she had the candles put out, forbade the servants to pay any homage to the poor image, and loaded it with reproaches and revilings!!!"—The author closes the chapter with this sensible paragraph—"I shall not particularize all the superstitions with which such a religion,

if it deserves that name, must necessarily inspire an ignorant and enslaved people. It seems the present policy to thicken the cloud of errors, which the genius of Peter, the humanity of Elizabeth, and the philosophy of Catharine, sought in some degree to attenuate. While we pity the state of degradation under which a great people crouches, we should do justice to the enlightened Russians, by whom it is lamented, but they are chained by prejudices, as the giant Gulliver, by the Lilliputians ; his bonds were weak and imperceptible as his enemies were minute, but every one of his hairs was separately fastened to the ground, and he was unable to raise his head."

In addition to the books already mentioned, I shall close this article of the *Greek Church*, with recommending Mr. TOOKE's *History of Russia*, which may be satisfactorily consulted on *this* as well as many other subjects ; for it is replete with information.

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## PROTESTANTS.

UNDER the appellation of *Protestants*, we include all who dissent from Popery, in whatever country they reside, or into whatever sects they have been since distributed. Abroad they are divided into two sorts—the *Lutherans*, who adhere to Luther's tenets ; and the *Reformed*, who follow the discipline of Geneva. They were called Protestants, because, in 1529, they *protested* against a decree of the Emperor Charles the Fifth, and

declared, that they appealed to a general council. A present this vast class comprehends those whom Papists used contemptuously to style *Hugonots* in France ; *Refugees* in Holland, who fled thither upon the revocation of the Edict of Nantz, 1684 ; the *Presbyterians* in Scotland ; the *Episcopalians* and *Non-conformists* in England ; together with a numerous body of Christians in America.

As the *Protestants* originated at the Reformation, it will be proper to give a brief account of this illustrious period of ecclesiastical history.

## REFORMATION.

FOR the three first centuries the religion of Jesus Christ stood on its own basis, was rapidly propagated among Jews and Gentiles, and suffered very severe persecutions from the Roman emperors. On the commencement of the fourth century, Constantine became a convert to Christianity, and incorporated it with the state. “ It was not till the fifth, or near the sixth century, that the Bishop of Rome arrogantly assumed an illegal supremacy over his fellow pastors, and in process of time aimed at the secular government of princes as well as subjects. Though several emperors embraced and defended Christianity, yet the gradual decay of the Roman empire was a serious impediment to the rising preachers of the newly established religion. Those accomplishments which adorned the conquests of the Romans, and the perfection of science, which had dignified their state, in such extent, were gradually swept away by the barbarous nations which

defeated them, and the close of the sixth century could not trace a vestige of that exalted nation's government or its laws. Between four and five hundred years was the glorious luminary of the gospel eclipsed by the dismal return of ignorance and of superstition.\* To these dark ages (as they are by some justly termed, and by others called *the night of time*) are to be attributed the doctrine of indulgences, partial absolution, transubstantiation, the creation and worship of saints, purgatory, monastic seclusion, &c. So swift was the extinction of knowledge, and its revival so impeded, that persons of the greatest eminence in point of station could scarcely read or write. The clergy themselves, who engrossed what little science was remaining, could scarcely translate the liturgy; and, when ordained, were expressly obliged to affirm, that

\* The *Crusades*, commonly called the *holy wars*, were expeditions undertaken by the Papists to drive the Turks from Palestine, or the land of Judea, and thus to rescue the holy sepulchre out of the hands of Infidels. There were eight of these crusades, the first in the year 1096, the last in 1270, assisted by Prince Edward, afterwards Edward I. King of England. The number of lives lost in these Quixotic expeditions is incredible; and it will remain to future ages a matter of astonishment, how enthusiasm and superstition could so completely infatuate the human mind. An account of the Crusades is given in Robertson's *Charles the Fifth*, and in Hume's *History of England*.

The *Inquisition* was a tribunal erected by the Popes for the examination and punishment of heretics. It was founded in the twelfth century by Father Dominic and his followers, who were sent by Pope Innocent the Third to *inquire* into the number and quality of heretics, and then to send an account to Rome. Hence they were termed *Inquisitors*, and their court the *Inquisition*. This infernal court was established in all Italy, and the dominions of Spain, except Naples and the Low Countries. Its cruelties were shocking beyond description; and were only one half of the bloody tale true, yet even then there is sufficient to freeze you with horror! See Dr. Chandler's *History of the Inquisition*, which is full of interesting information on the subject.

they could read the Gospels and Epistles, and explain them."

"The Reformation was effected in the sixteenth century, by the pious labours and unwearied studies of those bright characters, Erasmus, Luther, Huss, Jerome of Prague, &c. and as it should seem the particular act of Providence to facilitate their labours, and extend their influence, we find but half a century before the days of LUTHER the science of printing was discovered, and not long before that of the making of paper."

"This indefatigable reformer, having the way somewhat cleared for him by Erasmus, had the happiness to discover a copy of the Bible in the neglected library of his monastery. From so valuable a discovery the talents and application of this great man were called forth into more than ordinary exercise; and he quickly drew aside the veil which had concealed the rooted errors and abominations of the priesthood, and exposed the craft and artifice which had deluded the disciples, and disgraced the doctrine of the cross. Unawed by persecution, he proceeded coolly to examine into the several pretensions and inventions of the church of Rome, and overthrew them. He asserted and proved, that monastic retirement, if not contrary to, was no where required by the laws of God; and proposed to the Elector of Saxony, by whose permission he reformed the several churches within his dominions, to expel all abbots and monks, and to convert the convents of mendicant friars into public schools and hospitals. He proceeded to expose all the absurdities and superstitions of the Romish church, and had the satisfaction to see his cause prevail."—*Birch's Concilia.*

Dr. Robertson also observes—"It was from causes seemingly fortuitous, and from a source very inconsiderable, that all the mighty effects of the Reformation flowed. Leo the Tenth, when raised to the papal throne, found the revenues of the church exhausted by the vast projects of his two ambitious predecessors, Alexander the Sixth, and Julius the Second. His own temper, naturally liberal and enterprising, rendered him incapable of that severe and patient economy which the situation of his finances required. On the contrary, his schemes for aggrandizing the family of Medici, his love of splendour, his taste for pleasure, and his magnificence in rewarding men of genius, involved him daily in new expenses; in order to provide a fund for which, he tried every device that the fertile invention of priests had fallen upon to drain the credulous multitude. Among others, he had recourse to a sale of indulgences. The right of promulgating these indulgences in Germany, together with a share in the profits arising from the sale of them, was granted to Albert, Elector of Mentz, and Archbishop of Magdeburg, who, as his chief agent for retailing them in Saxony, employed Tetzels, a Dominican friar, of licentious morals, but of an active spirit, and remarkable for his noisy and popular eloquence. He, assisted by the monks of his order, executed the commission with great zeal and success, but with little discretion or decency; and though by magnifying excessively the benefit of their indulgences, and disposing of them at a very low price, they carried on for some time an extensive and lucrative traffic among the credulous multitude, the extravagance of their assertions, as well as the irregularities in their conduct, came at last to give

general offence. The princes and nobles were irritated at seeing their vassals drained of so much wealth, in order to replenish the treasury of a profuse pontiff. Men of piety regretted the delusion of the people, who, being taught to rely for the pardon of their sins on the indulgences which they purchased, did not think it incumbent on them either to abound in faith or to practise holiness. Even the most unthinking were shocked at the scandalous behaviour of Tetzal and his associates, who often squandered in drunkenness, gaming, and low debauchery, those sums which were piously bestowed, in hopes of obtaining eternal happiness; and *all* began to wish that some check were given to this commerce, no less detrimental to society than destructive to religion.

“ The corrupt state of the church prior to the Reformation, is acknowledged by an author who was both abundantly able to judge concerning this matter, and who was not over forward to confess it.—“ For some years (says Bellarmine) before the Lutheran and Calvinistic heresies were published, there was not (as contemporary authors testify) any severity in ecclesiastical judicatories, any discipline with regard to morals, any knowledge of sacred literature, any reverence for divine things; there was not almost any religion remaining.”—Such a remarkable confession made by the avowed champion of Popery, should not pass unnoticed by Protestants; and before the enemies of Protestantism inveigh against the Reformation, let them consider its absolute necessity, and contemplate the innumerable advantages with which it was attended.”\*

\* The *proselyting* spirit of the Romish religion is proverbial. The

A symbolical representation of the Reformation was exhibited before Charles the Vth and his brother Ferdinand at Augsburgh, in 1530, at the time when the Lutherans presented their confession of faith to that assembly. As the princes were at table, a company of persons offered to act a small comedy for the entertainment of the company. They were ordered to begin; and first entered a man in the dress of a doctor, who brought a large quantity of small wood, of straight and crooked billets, and laid it on the middle of the hearth, and retired. On his back was written *Reuchlin*. When this actor went off, another entered apparelled also like a doctor, who attempted to make faggots of the wood, and to fit the crooked to the straight; but having laboured long to no purpose, he went away out of humour, and shaking his head. On his back appeared the name of *Erasmus*. A third dressed like an Augustinian monk, came in with a chaffing-dish full of fire, gathered up the crooked wood, clapped it on the fire, and blew it till he made it burn, and went away; having upon his frock the name of *Luther*. A fourth entered dressed like an Emperor, who seeing the crooked wood all on fire, seemed much concerned, and to put it out, drew his sword, and

above account of the Reformation is therefore designed to counteract the spread of Popery, which no doubt some of the French priests are attempting, who have been so plentifully imported into this country. No one pities their *exiled* situation more than the writer of this Sketch; but he should be sorry if (like Dr. Horsley) his commiseration should get the better of his *Protestantism*, and induce him to approve of a religion which (to say the least) is certainly, in the opinion of all Protestants, the grossest corruption of Christianity. The Roman Catholics in England, however, are in general more intelligent and liberal than they were in former days.



poked the fire with it, which only made it burn the brisker. On his back was written Charles the Vth. Lastly, a fifth entered in his pontifical habit and triple crown, who seemed extremely surprised to see the crooked billets all on fire, and by his countenance and attitude betrayed excessive grief. Then looking about on every side to see if he could find any water to extinguish the flame, he casts his eyes on two bottles in a corner of the room, one of which was full of oil and the other of water, and in his hurry he unfortunately seized the oil, and poured it on the fire, which unfortunately made it blaze so violently, that he was forced to walk off. On his back was written *Leo the Xth.*

The reader, who is acquainted with the history of the Reformation, will perceive the propriety of the lively representations here given of those several characters who were the principal actors in bringing about that memorable event.

CHILLINGWORTH, addressing himself to a Romish writer, speaks of *the religion of Protestants* in the following terms, worthy to be inscribed in letters of gold.—“ Know then, Sir, that when I say *the religion of Protestants* is in prudence to be preferred before your’s; as on the one side I do not understand by your religion the doctrine of *Bellarmino* or *Baronius*, or any other private man amongst you, nor the doctrine of the Sorbonne, or of the Jesuits, or of the Dominicans, or of any other particular company among you, but that wherein you all agree, or profess to agree, *The Doctrine of the Council of Trent*: So accordingly, on the other side, by *the religion of Protestants* I do not understand the doctrine of *Luther*, or *Cal-*

*vin*, or *Melancthon*, nor the *confession of Augsburg*, or *Geneva*, nor the *Catechism of Heidelberg*, nor the *articles of the Church of England*—no, nor the *harmony of Protestant confessions* ; but that wherein they all agree, and which they all subscribe with a greater harmony, as a perfect rule of faith and action, that is, **THE BIBLE**. The *Bible*, I say, the *Bible only*, is the religion of Protestants. Whatsoever else they believe besides it, and the plain, irrefragable, indubitable consequences of it, well may they hold it as a matter of opinion ; but as a matter of faith and religion, neither can they with coherence to their own grounds believe it themselves, nor require belief of it of others, without most high and most schismatical presumption. I, for my part, after a long, and (as I verily believe and hope) impartial search of the true way to eternal happiness, do profess plainly, that I cannot find any rest for the sole of my foot, but upon this rock only. I see plainly, and with my own eyes, that there are Popes against Popes, and councils against councils ; some fathers against other fathers, the same fathers against themselves ; a consent of fathers of one age against a consent of fathers of another age ; traditive interpretations of scripture are pretended, but there are few or none to be found : no tradition but that of scripture can derive itself from the fountain, but may be plainly proved either to have been brought in, in such an age after *Christ*, or that in such an age it was not in. In a word, there is no sufficient certainty but of scripture only for any *considering* man to build upon. This, therefore, and this only, I have reason to believe. This I will profess : according to this, I will live ; and for this if there

be occasion, I will not only willingly, but even gladly lose my life, though I should be sorry that *Christians* should take it from me.

“ Propose me any thing out of this book, and require whether I believe or no, and seem it never so incomprehensible to human reason, I will subscribe it with hand and heart, as knowing no demonstration can be stronger than this, *God hath said so, therefore it is true.* In other things I will take no man’s liberty of judging from him; neither shall any man take mine from me. I will think no man the worse *man*, nor the worse *Christian*; I will love no man the less, for differing in opinion from me. And what measure I mete to others, I expect from them again. I am fully assured that God *does* not, and therefore men *ought* not, to require any more of any man than this—“ *To believe the scripture to be God’s word; to endeavour to find the true sense of it, and to live according to it.*”\* Chillingworth’s Works, fol. edit. 1742.

\* Our English translation of the Bible was made in the time and by the appointment of James the First. According to Fuller, the list of the translators amounts to forty-seven. This number was arranged under six divisions, and several parcels of the Bible assigned them. Every one of the company was to translate the whole parcel, then they were to compare these together, and when any company had finished their part they were to communicate it to the other companies, so that nothing should pass without general consent. The names of the persons and places where they met, together with the portions of scripture assigned each company, are to be found in *Johnson’s Historical Account of the several Translations of the Bible.* These good and learned men entered on their work in the spring, 1607, and three years elapsed before the translation was finished.

From the mutability of language, the variation of customs, and the progress of knowledge, several passages in the Bible require to be newly translated, or to be materially corrected. Hence, in the present age, when biblical literature has been assiduously cultivated, different parts of the

It may be proper to add, that Chillingworth was a learned divine of the Church of England, and lived in the reign of Charles the First. In the earlier part of

sacred volume have been translated by very able hands. The substituting a new translation of the Bible in the room of the one now in common use, has been much debated. Dr. Knox, in his ingenious essays, together with others, argue against it, whilst Dr. Newcombe, the late Lord Primate of Ireland, the late Dr. Geddes, of the Catholic persuasion, and the late Rev. Gilbert Wakefield, contended strenuously for it. The correction of several passages, however, would deprive Deists of many of their objections, prevent Christians from being misled into some absurd opinions, and be the means of making the scriptures more intelligible, and consequently more beneficial to the world.

Dr. Alexander Geddes, at his decease, had got as far as the *Psalms*, in the translation of the Old Testament. Dr. Newcombe and Mr. Wakefield published entire translations of the New Testament, of singular merit and ability. The Rev. Edmund Butcher also has just laid before the public a *Family Bible*, in which many of the errors of the common translation are corrected, and notes added by way of illustration, whilst the text broken down into *dai'y lessons*, is happily adapted to the purposes of family devotion.

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On this it may be proper to remark, that the English translation of the Bible is, as a whole, perhaps, the best and most literal of any translation of any book that ever appeared in any language; that the number of emendations proposed by later translators more frequently obscure than illustrate, and not seldom pervert a plain passage to serve the purpose of a party. There is not in the present translation, as it stands, one sentence of dangerous tendency, which is more than can be said for some of the "improvements" of Geddes and Wakefield. A few verbal alterations in our own language might, perhaps, be proper. For instance, the verb "tempt" was used in the days of James to signify *try*, whether lawfully or unlawfully; the meaning is now restricted to unlawful trying, exposing to seduction, and therefore might be changed with advantage in some passages of Scripture to the verb *try*, as in Genesis xxii, v. 1.; but the unceremonious liberties which many, even well-meaning men, use with Scripture language is highly to be deprecated—"add thou not unto his words lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar." This caution, says Mr. Scott, is worthy of their notice who are continually wanting to alter and amend, as they call it, the text of Scripture.

life he embraced the Romish religion ; but having found, after the most impartial investigation, that it was false and inconclusive, he returned to the communion of the church of England, and vindicated the Protestant religion, in a work entitled, *The Religion of Protestants a Safe Way to Salvation*. Many curious particulars respecting Popery will be found in *the Romish Ecclesiastical History of late Years*, by Richard Steele, Esq., in Geddes's *Tracts*, and in Bowyer's *History of the Popes*.

Before we quit the subject of the Reformation, it may not be improper to add a short account of the *Lutherans*. It has been already said, that the Protestants were at first divided into the Lutherans, who adhere to Luther's tenets, and the Reformed, who follow the doctrine and discipline of Geneva. In other words, Luther was at the head of one party ; Calvin, the chief of the other. The tenets of the latter have been specified ; those of the former, therefore, are the present subject of inquiry.



## LUTHERANS.

### LIFE OF LUTHER.

MARTIN LUTHER was born, 10th November, 1483, at Aisleben, in Upper Saxony. His parents, though of no very elevated rank, bestowed exemplary care on the education of their son, which he ever after gratefully

rememberea ; particularly, he delighted to acknowledge the benefit he received from the early instructions of his mother. When of age, sufficient to be sent to school, he attended George Omilius, an Augustine friar, in his native place, thence, at 14, he went to Magdeburg, and afterwards proceeded to Issenach, where he remained four years, under Trebonius, then high in repute as a teacher. Having, by that indefatigable ardour which characterized him, laid a foundation of classical learning, he entered the University of Erfurt, 1501—2, and was created Master of Arts in his twentieth year, 1503. His high attainments induced his friends to urge him to study law ; but Providence had designed him a nobler course. In an excursion to the country with a young friend, Alexius, they were overtaken by a thunder-storm ; Alexius was killed, and he escaped. On the spot, he vowed to dedicate himself and all his powers henceforth to the service of God. He became first a monk of the Augustinian Eremites, and afterwards Professor of Divinity [1517] in a new University founded at Wittemburg, by Frederic, Elector of Saxony. While in the monastery, he had found a treasure, which lay unheeded by his brethren, a Latin copy of the Bible. This he studied with intense eagerness ; and, when he obtained a chair, began immediately to inculcate its doctrines. The novelty of this mode of teaching created an uncommon sensation, and prepared the minds of the students for the mighty envets about to follow. It was at that portentous time that Tetsel arrived, preaching indulgences ; and Luther immediately set himself against a measure so inimical to the interests of piety and virtue, which was rendered

still more detestable by the flagrant profligacy of the preacher. In September 1517, he openly impugned the doctrine of indulgences, in 95 propositions. His boldness, and the excellence of his cause, soon procured him many followers ; and his rapid success made the voluptuous Leo X. and his corrupt court, attempt suppressing the dangerous innovator.

Cajetan, papal legate in Germany, was ordered to summon Luther before him, and command him to retract, or send him to Rome. The intrepid reformer refused to yield to any force but argument ; and, fortunately, the legate was prevented from using any other. The progress of truth in his mind was, however, gradual ; he had not yet thought of questioning the supremacy of the Pope, or considering the Romish church as radically corrupt, and was even anxiously attempting an accommodation, when the impatient fury of the Holy See, 1520, ordered him to recant within sixty days, on pain of being excommunicated. He immediately and publicly renounced her communion ; and declared the Pope an apostate, heretic, and antichrist. Germany was now so much agitated, that the Emperor Charles V. summoned Luther to appear at Worms, and promised him protection on the journey. His friends, notwithstanding, were much afraid, and endeavoured to dissuade him, reminding him of the fate of John Huss ; but his mind rose with his circumstances, and he boldly declared, “ that if there were as many devils at Worms as tiles on the houses, he would still go there.” Much concession in the cause of truth from such a man was not to be expected, yet he acknowledged that he had been oc-

casionally too violent, and offered to retract any of his opinions that might be proved erroneous from Scripture. The Emperor was strongly advised to violate his safe conduct ; but he remembered the misfortunes of Sigismund, and avoided a similar infamy. An edict, commanding his seizure as an excommunicated heretic, as soon as it should have expired, was issued. The kindness of the Elector of Saxony withdrew him from the storm. On his return, he was carried by a party of men in masks to the Castle of Wortemburg, where he was concealed nine months ; this retreat he called his Patmos, and here he effected his most important work, the cope-stone of the Reformation, a translation of the Scriptures into the vulgar tongue. He married a nun, 1525 ; enjoyed a year of repose, 1526 ; had the happiness of seeing the reformed religion established in Saxony, 1527 ; and, after a life of almost super-human exertion, died quietly, 1546. His works were collected after his death, and printed in 7 volumes, folio.



#### TENETS OF THE LUTHERANS.

The *Lutherans*, of all Protestants, are those who differ least from the Romish church, as they affirm that the body and blood of Christ are materially present in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, though in an incomprehensible manner ; they likewise represent some religious rites and institutions, as the use of images in churches, the distinguishing vestments of the clergy, the private



confession of sins, the use of wafers in the administration of the Lord's Supper, the form of exorcism in the celebration of baptism, and other ceremonies of the like nature as tolerable, and some of them useful. The Lutherans maintain, with regard to the divine decrees, that they respect the salvation or misery of men, in consequence of a *previous knowledge of their sentiments and characters*, and not as free and unconditional, and as founded on the mere will of God, which is the tenet of the Calvinists. Towards the close of the last century, the Lutherans began to entertain a greater liberality of sentiment than they had before adopted, though in many places they persevered longer in severe and despotic principles than other Protestant churches. Their public teachers now enjoy an unbounded liberty of dissenting from the decisions of those symbols or creeds,\* which were once deemed almost infallible rules of faith and practice, and of declaring their dissent in the manner they judge most expedient. Mosheim attributes this change in their sentiments to the maxim which they ge-

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\* The Lutherans call their standard books symbolical, from a Greek word that signifies collection or compilation; for it is their leading principle, that the Holy Scriptures are the only source whence to derive our sentiments, whether of faith or practice. The first of these is the "Confession of Augsburg;" next, "The Articles of Smalcald," with the Shorter and Larger Catechisms of Luther; and the "Form of Concord." The countries where the Lutherans chiefly predominate are the north of Germany, Saxony, and the greatest part of Prussia, Denmark, Norway, Sweden there are likewise Lutheran churches in England, Holland, Russia, North America, and the West India islands. Out of eighteen Protestant universities in Germany [1810], fourteen were Lutheran.

nerally adopted, that *Christians were accountable to God alone, for their religious opinions* ; and that no individual could be justly punished by the magistrate for his erroneous opinions, while he conducted himself like a virtuous and obedient subject, and made no attempts to disturb the peace and order of civil society.

It may be just added, that Luther's opinion respecting the sacrament is termed *Consubstantiation* ; and it was, that the partakers of the Lord's Supper received, *along with the bread and wine, the real body and blood of Christ*. And this, says Dr. Mosheim, in their judgment, was a mystery which they did not pretend to explain. But his translator, Dr. Maclaine, justly remarks, " That Luther was not so modest as Dr. Mosheim here represents him. He pretended to explain his doctrine of the *real presence*, absurd and contradictory as it is, and uttered much senseless jargon on the subject. As in a *red-hot iron*, said he, two distinct substances, viz. *iron and fire* are united, so is the body of Christ joined with the bread, in the eucharist. I mention this miserable comparison, to shew into what absurdities the towering pride of system will often betray men of deep sense and true genius."

Such is the account given us of the Lutherans in a respectable work, and it appears to be founded in truth. I shall only remark, that according to the above sketch, Luther differed considerably from Calvin, respecting election and reprobation, and as to the principle, that Christians are accountable to God alone, for their religious opinions, it is a sentiment worthy of a great and elevated mind. It is the corner-stone on which the Re-

formation has been raised. It is the only true foundation of religious improvement, and wherever it is sincerely embraced, will check every degree of uncharitableness and persecution, and forward the blessed reign of love and charity amongst the professors of Christianity.

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## HUGONOTS.

THE appellation *Hugonots*, was given to the French Protestants in 1561. The term is (by some) supposed to be derived from a gate in Tours, called *Hugon*, where they first assembled. According to others, the name is taken from the first words of their original protest or confession of faith—*Huc nos venimus*, &c. During the reign of Charles the Ninth, and on the 24th of August, 1572, happened the massacre of Bartholomew, when 70,000 Protestants throughout France were butchered, with circumstances of aggravated cruelty. It began at Paris in the night of the festival of Bartholomew, by secret orders from Charles the Ninth, at the instigation of his mother, the Queen Dowager Catharine de Medicis. See Sully's Memoirs, and also a fine description of it in the second canto of Voltaire's *Henriade*.

In 1598, Henry the Fourth passed the famous *Edict of Nantz*, which secured to his old friends the Protestants the free exercise of their religion. This edict was revoked by Lewis the Fourteenth. Their churches were then erased to the ground; their persons insulted by the soldiery, and, after the loss of innumerable lives, 50,000

valuable members of society were driven into exile ! In Holland they built several places of worship, and had amongst them some distinguished preachers. Among others were Superville, Dumont, Dubosc, and the eloquent Saurin, five volumes of whose select sermons were translated into our language by the late Mr. Robinson of Cambridge. In one of these sermons Saurin makes the following fine apostrophe to that tyrant, Lewis the Fourteenth, by whom they were driven into exile—" And thou, dreadful prince, whom I once honoured as my king, and whom I yet respect as a scourge in the hand of Almighty God, *thou* also shalt have a part in my good wishes ! These provinces, which thou threatenest, but which the arm of the Lord protects ; this country, which thou fillest with refugees, but fugitives animated with love ; these walls, which contain a thousand martyrs of thy making, but whom religion renders victorious, all these yet resound benedictions in thy favour. God grant the fatal bandage that hides the truth from thine eyes may fall off ! May God forget the rivers of blood with which thou hast deluged the earth, and which thy reign hath caused to be shed ! May God blot out of his book the injuries which thou hast done us, and while he rewards the sufferers, may he pardon those who exposed us to suffer ! O may God, who hath made thee to us, and to the whole church, a minister of his judgments, make thee a dispenser of his favours, and administrator of his mercy !"\*

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\* It cannot, however, be dissembled, that the Hugonots of France merited their fate, though not from the hands of their tyrant, by their base

About the time of the Revolution, 1688, there were many controversies between the Protestant and the Popish divines, occasioned by James the Second's unavailing attempt to bring in Popery. Tillotson and Burnet, two clergymen of the church of England, rendered Protestantism great service by their writings; and it is conjectured, were, on that account, elevated to the Bench by King William of immortal memory. There are also two excellent volumes of *Sermons against Popery*, preached in the early part of this century, by various *dissenting ministers*, at *Salter's Hall*. See also a sermon by the Rev. Robert Winter, entitled, "*Reflections on the present State of Popery*," delivered at Salter's Hall, November, 1800; from the perusal of which, the reader will find much satisfaction. Burnet's *History of the Reformation*, and *The History of his Own Times*, published after his death by his son, are two works which throw much light on the state of religion in the last and preceding centuries among Papists, Churchmen, and Dissenters. The merit of these publications, particularly of the latter, is judiciously appreciated by Dr. Kippis, under the article *Burnet*, in the *Biographia Britannica*. To these may now be added, an *excellent Defence of Protestantism*, by Dr. Sturges, in his answer to Mr. Mil-

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subserviency to the established church, and their fruitless endeavours to render the Protestant religion agreeable to the Roman Catholics. Before the revocation of the Edict of Nantz, the French Protestants, from laxity of discipline, and corruption of manners, had themselves paved the way for their own destruction. Quick's Synodicon presents a miserable picture of the internal state of these unfortunate people.

ner, who, in his *History of Winchester*, takes every opportunity of reprobating the Protestant religion, and of erecting on its ruins his beloved edifice of Popery. Dr. S. shews the rise, progress, and tendency of the Romish religion; animadverts with spirit on the calumnies by which his antagonist had endeavoured to blacken the characters of the reformers: and, finally, he proves the Protestant religion by its views of the Divine Being, and by its regard for the rights of mankind, to be the *only true* and *primitive* Christianity.

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## EPISCOPALIANS.

THE *Episcopalians*, in the modern acceptation of the term, belong more especially to the Church of England, and derive this title from *Episcopus*, the Latin word for bishop; or if it be referred to its Greek origin from *σκοπεω* to look, *επι* over, implying the care and diligence with which bishops are expected to preside over those committed to their guidance and direction. They insist on the divine origin of their bishops, and other church officers, and on the alliance between church and state. Respecting these subjects, however, Warburton and Hoadley, together with others of the learned amongst them, have different opinions, as they also have on their thirty-nine articles; which were established in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. They are to be found in most *Common-Prayer Books*; and the Episcopal church in

America has reduced their number to twenty. By some, these articles are made to speak the language of Calvinism, and by others have been interpreted in favour of Arminianism. The doctrines and discipline of the Church of England are nearly connected with the reformation of Luther in Germany, and also with the state of ecclesiastical affairs for a considerable time before that reformation commenced.

Eusebius positively asserts, that Christianity was first introduced into South Britain by the apostles and their disciples; and it is supposed that the apostle Paul visited this country, whose zeal, diligence, and fortitude, were abundant. It is also said, that numbers of persons professed the Christian faith here about the year 150; and according to Usher, there was, in the year 182, a school of learning, to provide the British churches with proper teachers. On the subject of *the first introduction of Christianity in this island*, the reader is referred to the first volume of *Henry's History of Great Britain*, where his curiosity will be considerably gratified.

JOHN WICKLIFFE, educated at Oxford, in the reign of Edward the Third, was the first person who publicly questioned, and boldly refuted the doctrines of Popery. He left behind him many followers, who were called *Wickliffites* and *Lollards*; the latter being a term of reproach taken from the Flemish tongue. In the council of Constance, 1415, the memory and opinions of Wickliffe (who died peaceably at Lutterworth, 1384,) were condemned, and soon after his bones were dug up and burnt. This impotent rage of his enemies served only to promote the cause of reform which Wickliffe had espoused. It

is with a view to this subsequent extension of his doctrine that the judicious Rapin observes—"His ashes were thrown into the brook which runs through the town of Lutterworth, the brook conveyed the ashes to the Severn, and the Severn to the Sea!"

The Church of England broke off from the Romish church in the time of Henry the Eighth, when (as has been already related) Luther had began the reformation in Germany. In earlier life, and during the earlier part of his reign, Henry was a bigotted Papist, burnt William Tyndal, who made one of the first and best English translations of the New Testament, and wrote fiercely in defence of the seven sacraments, against Luther, for which the Pope honoured him with the title *Defender of the Faith*. This title is retained by the kings of England even to the present day, though they are the avowed enemies of those opinions, by contending for which he acquired that honourable distinction. Henry, falling out with the Pope, took the government of ecclesiastical affairs into his own hands; and, having reformed many enormous abuses, entitled himself Supreme Head of the Church.

When the Reformation in England first took place, great efforts were made to promote the reading of the scriptures among the common people. Among other devices for the purpose, the following curious one was adopted:—Bonner, Bishop of London, caused six Bibles to be chained to certain convenient places in St. Paul's church, for all that were so well inclined to resort unto; together with a certain admonition to the readers fastened upon the pillars to which the Bibles were chained, to



this tenor—"That whosoever came there to read should prepare himself to be edified, and made the better thereby; that he bring with him discretion, honest intent, charity, reverence, and quiet behaviour; that there should no such number meet together there as to make a multitude; that no such exposition be made thereupon but what is declared in the book itself; that it be not read with noise in time of divine service, or that any disputation or contention be used about it; that in case they continued their former misbehaviour, and refused to comply with these directions, the king would be forced against his will to remove the occasion, and take the Bible out of the church."—See Johnson's *Historical Account of the several English Translations of the Bible*, and the opposition they met with from the Church of Rome.

The Church of England is governed by the king, who is the supreme head; by two archbishops, and by twenty-four bishops. The benefices of the bishops were converted by William the Conqueror into temporal baronies; so that every prelate has a seat and vote in the House of Peers. Dr. Benjamin Hoadley, however, in a sermon preached from this text, *my kingdom is not of this world*, insisted that the clergy had no pretensions to temporal jurisdiction, which gave rise to various publications, termed by way of eminence the *Bangorian Controversy*, for Hoadley was then Bishop of Bangor.\*

There is a bishop of Sodor and Man, who has no seat

\* The memory of this eminent prelate has been insulted by Mr. *Milner* in his *History of Winchester*; but Dr. Hoadley, Ashe and Dr. Sturges have amply vindicated it.

in the House of Peers; and a late prelate of this see was the amiable and learned Dr. Wilson. Since the death of the pedantic and intolerant Archbishop Laud, men of moderate principles have been raised to the see of Canterbury, and this hath tended not a little to the tranquillity of church and state. The established church of Ireland is the same as the church of England, and is governed by four archbishops and eighteen bishops. Since the Union, it sends four spiritual Lords to the British Parliament.

In the course of the last century disputes arose among the English clergy respecting the propriety of subscribing to any human formulary of religious sentiments. An application for its removal was made to Parliament in 1772, by the petitioning clergy, and received, as it deserved, the most public discussion in the House of Commons. The third edition of Archdeacon Blackburn's excellent *Confessional*, was published 1770, two years previous to the presentation of this clerical petition, when the long controversy in consequence of the work, was closed, and indeed introductory to the application to Parliament pending, by which the controversy was renewed. *Mr. Dyer's* Treatise against Subscription, appeared many years afterwards. Some respectable clergymen were so impressed with the impropriety of subscription, that they resigned their livings, and published reasons for their conduct. Among these, the names of *Robertson, Jebb, Matty, Lindsey*, and *Disney*, will be long remembered. Several others, indeed, resigned preferment held by the same tenure for similar reasons, without giving such reasons to the public, as *Mr. Tyrwhitt, Mr. Wakefield, &c.*; and it

has been said that many more reluctantly continue in their conformity, under the contest between their convictions and their inability from various causes to extricate themselves, but who will never repeat their subscriptions. The Rev. T. Lindsey, however, withdrew from the church, because he objected to the trinity; professing to worship the *Father* only as the *one true God*, to the exclusion of Jesus Christ and of the Holy Spirit, as objects of worship. See “*The Book of Common Prayer reformed*,” used at Essex Street Chapel; a new edition of which has been just published.

Attempts have been made to amend the articles, the liturgy, and some things which related to the internal government of the church of England. Dr. Watson, the present Bishop of Landaff, wrote a *Letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury*, in the year 1781, in which he argues for the propriety of a more equal distribution of salary among the different orders of the clergy. But this plan, projected by the worthy prelate, together with the preceding proposals for reform by the authors of the *Free and Candid Disquisitions*, and the *Appeal to Reason and Candor*, have been suffered to sink into oblivion. The church of England has produced a succession of eminent men. Among its ornaments are to be reckoned *Usher, Hall, Taylor, Stillingfleet, Cudworth, Wilkins, Tillotson, Cumberland, Barrow, Burnet, Pearson, Hammond, Whitby, Clarke, Hoadley, Jortin, Secker, Horne, Lowth, and Warburton*. In the Appendix to *Mosheim’s Ecclesiastical History*, will be found a circumstantial account of the correspondence carried on in the year 1718, between Dr. Wm. Wake, Archbishop of Canterbury, and certain

doctors of the Sorbonne of Paris, relative to a project of union between the English and Gallican churches. *Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity*—*Pearson on the Creed*, *Burnet on the Thirty-nine Articles*, and Bishop Prettyman's *Elements of Theology*,\* are deemed the best defences of Episcopacy.

The Reformation in England, begun under the auspices of Henry the Eighth, was greatly checked by Mary, who proceeded like a female fury to re-establish Popery. In her sanguinary reign were burnt one archbishop, four bishops, twenty-one divines, eight gentlemen, one hundred and eighty-four artificers, and one hundred husbandmen, servants, and labourers; twenty-six wives, twenty widows, and nine virgins, two boys, and two infants!!! On the death of Mary, 1558, Elizabeth ascended the throne, repealed the laws which had been established in favour of Popery, and restored her supremacy. In these matters she wonderfully succeeded, since of 9,400 beneficed clergymen, about 120 only refused to comply with the Reformation. The establishment of Protestantism in England underwent various fluctuations till the *glorious Revolution* under William, in 1688, placed it on a firm and permanent foundation. The family of the Stuarts were bitter enemies to the civil and religious liberties of their subjects, and violently attached to Popery. Dr. Goldsmith tells us, in his *History of England*, that James the Second, in endeavouring to convert his subjects to the Popish religion, descended so

\* Mr. *William Friend*, the celebrated mathematician, late of Cambridge, published a series of *letters* to this prelate, by way of reply to certain passages in his *Elements of Theology*.

low as Colonel Kirke. But that daring and unprincipled soldier assured his majesty that he was pre-engaged, for that if ever he did change his religion, he had promised the Emperor of Morocco, when quartered at Tangiers, to turn *Mahometan* !

Mr. Gisborne, in his excellent *Familiar Survey of the Christian Religion*, has the following remarks on church government :—" In every community or body of men, civil or ecclesiastical, some species of government is requisite for the good of the whole. Otherwise all is irregularity, and interminable confusion. How then in any particular country is the Christian church to be governed ? " Every separate congregation," answers the *Independent*, " is a sovereign church amenable to no extrinsic jurisdiction, and entitled to no jurisdiction over other churches." " That mode of government," replies the *Presbyterian*, " is calculated to destroy unity, co-operation, and concord among Christians. All congregations within the same, which agree in doctrine, ought to be under the general superintendence of a representative assembly, composed of their ministers and delegates." " Such a representative assembly," returns the *Episcopalian*, " wants vigour and dispatch, and is perpetually open to tumult and partiality, and faction. Divide the country into dioceses, and station a bishop in each, armed with sufficient authority, and restrained by adequate laws, from abusing it. Such was the apostolic government of the church—such, perhaps," he adds, " was the government enjoined on succeeding ages." " Away," cries the *Papist*, " with these treasonable discussions. The Pope, the successor of St. Peter, is by divine right the

only source of ecclesiastical power, the universal monarch of the universal church.”

Writing as I am to Protestants, I may pass by the claim of the successor of St. Peter. But the concluding words of the Episcopalian are of prime importance. If Christ or his apostles enjoined the uniform adoption of Episcopacy, the question is decided. Did Christ then or his apostles deliver or indirectly convey such an injunction? This topic has been greatly controverted. The fact appears to be this—that our Saviour did not pronounce upon the subject; that the apostles uniformly established a bishop in every district, as soon as the church in that district became numerous, and thus clearly evinced their judgment as to the form of ecclesiastical government, most advantages at least in those days to Christianity; but that they left no command, which rendered Episcopacy universally indispensable in future times, if other forms should evidently promise, through local opinions and circumstances, greater benefit to religion. Such is the general sentiment of the present church of England on the subject. Bishop Prettyman has expressed himself much after the same manner in his *Elements of Theology*.

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Adam thus gives the state of their establishment. The number of inhabitants in England and Wales is supposed to be about 8,000,000; of these one-fifth or more are said to dissent. The number of parishes is nearly 10,000; and the church livings are in the gift of the King, the Bishops, the two Universities, the Cathedrals, the nobility,

gentry, &c. &c. These livings, of all descriptions, amount to about 11,755 rectories, vicarages, &c. &c. The revenues of the church are considered by some as very considerable; but, according to the great Lord Chatham, they are but “a pittance,” being only about three millions of money, *i. e.* thirty hundred thousand pounds sterling; while the number of the established clergy, of all ranks and orders, amount to no less than eighteen thousand! It may, perhaps, be proper to add, that some later “political” writers estimate the sum paid to the established clergy at not less than three times three millions; but certainly the first estimate—the “pittance”—would be a pretty fair tax for a nation to pay; and, if equally divided, might afford full maintenance for all the teachers of religion, as by law established. Unfortunately, however, it is very unequally divided, some of the high dignitaries levying many thousand pounds per annum, while a great number of the curates who perform the drudgery receive (“a pittance,” shall we call it? of) £10 or £20. In Ireland the members of the established church are estimated at 300,000, out of a population of five millions. The revenue is still more enormous in proportion to the numbers of their clergy, or the duty performed.

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## NON-JURORS.

IN Scotland, and other parts, since the Revolution, there existed a species of Episcopalians called *Non-jurors*, because being inflexibly attached to the *Stuarts*,

who were then driven from the throne, they refused to take the oath of allegiance to the *Brunswick* family. On the decease, however, of the Pretender, whom the Non-jurors stiled Prince Charles, and who died at Rome, 1788, they complied with the requisition of Government, and now the distinction is abolished.

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These were the remains of the Scottish Prelatists, who for so long a term had persecuted the Presbyterians, and who, in consequence of their turbulent factious disposition, were objects of natural jealousy to the government. They were incapacitated for their civil offences from enjoying civil offices till 1792, when the penal laws, which had been enacted against them, were repealed. Since that period the Episcopal church in Scotland has obtained a great accession in numbers and respectability from several congregations, under the pastoral care of English ordained clergymen, uniting in religious communion with their bishops and clergy; who, in 1804, having subscribed the 39 Articles of the Church of England, became a branch of the united Episcopalian church of the three kingdoms. There are eight bishops—Aberdeen, Ross, Glasgow, Moray, Edinburgh, Dunkeld, and Brechin, of whom one is *Primus*, or Primate.

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## DISSENTERS.

*Dissenters* from the church of England made their first appearance in Queen Elizabeth's time, when, on ac-



count of the extraordinary purity which they proposed in religious worship and conduct, they were reproached with the name of *Puritans*. They were greatly increased by the act of uniformity, which took place on Bartholomew-day 1662, in the reign of Charles the Second. By this act 2,000 ministers were obliged to quit the established church, refusing to *conform* to certain conditions, whence they were called *Non-conformists*. An instructive and entertaining account of the lives, literature, and piety of these good men, is to be found in *Palmer's Non-conformist Memorial*. Their descendants are known by the name of *Protestant Dissenters*, and rank under the three respectable denominations of Presbyterians, Independants, and Baptists.

Of the origin and progress of the Dissenters, a full account is contained in *Neal's History of the Puritans*, an improved edition of which work was lately published by Dr. Toulmin of Taunton, who has accompanied it with notes, in which are obviated the objections which have been made to it by Grey, Maddox, Warburton, and others. Here the historian traces, step by step, the differences which originally occasioned the separation, and an affecting narrative is given of the sufferings which our forefathers were doomed to undergo in the cause of religious liberty. A brief history of the Puritans also was published in 1773, of which the author, the Rev. J. Cornish, has given an enlarged and pleasing edition. The principles on which the Dissenters separate from the church of England are the same with those on which she separates herself from the church of Rome. They may be summarily comprehended in these three : 1. The

right of private judgment. 2. Liberty of Conscience. And, 3. The perfection of scripture as a Christian's *only* rule of faith and practice.

The late Dr. Taylor of Norwich, thus expressed himself concerning the principles and worship of the Dissenters—"The principles and worship of Dissenters are not formed upon such slight foundation as the unlearned and thoughtless may imagine. They were thoroughly considered and judiciously reduced to the standard of scripture and the writings of antiquity, by a great number of men of learning and integrity. I mean the *Bartholomew-divines*, or the ministers ejected in the year 1662, men prepared to lose all, and to suffer martyrdom itself, and who actually resigned their livings (which with most of them were, under God, all that they and their families had to subsist upon) rather than sin against God and desert the cause of civil and religious liberty, which, together with serious religion, would, I am persuaded, have sunk to a very low ebb in the nation, had it not been for the bold and noble stand these worthies made against imposition upon conscience, profaneness, and arbitrary power. They had the best education *England* could afford; most of them were excellent scholars, judicious divines, pious, faithful, and laborious ministers, of great zeal for God and religion, undaunted and courageous in their master's work, standing close to their people in the worst of times, diligent in their studies, solid, affectionate, powerful, awakening preachers, aiming at the advancement of real vital religion in the hearts and lives of men, which it cannot be denied, flourished greatly wherever they could influence. Particularly they

were men of great devotion and eminent abilities in prayer, uttered as God enabled them from the abundance of their hearts and affections, men of divine eloquence in pleading at the throne of grace, raising and melting the affections of their hearers, and being happily instrumental in transfusing into their souls the same spirit and heavenly gift. And this was the ground of all their other qualifications, they were excellent men, because excellent, instant, and fervent in prayer. Such were the *fathers* and *first formers* of the *Dissenting interest*. *Let my soul for ever be with the souls of these men.*”

The *Test Act* excludes Dissenters from filling public offices, except they take the sacrament at the established church, which some think cannot be consistently done by any conscientious Dissenter. Hence loud complaints have been raised respecting this exclusion, since, as members of the civil community, they are entitled to all the common privileges of that community. The *Test Act* was originally levelled against the Roman Catholics. The Dissenters have made several unsuccessful applications for its repeal. The question was warmly agitated in the House of Commons, 1787, and on each side numerous publications issued from the press. The chief argument urged for the continuance of the *Test Act* is *the safety of the established church*. The principal arguments alleged for its repeal are, that it is *a prostitution of the Lord's Supper*, and that *to withhold civil rights on account of religious opinions, is a specious of persecution*.\*

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\* It is now repealed.

The Dissenters, as a body, have not been unfruitful of great and learned men. Among their ornaments are to be ranked Baxter, Bates, Howe, Owen, Williams, Neal, Henry, Stennet, Evans, Gale, Foster, Leland, Grosvenor, Watts, Lardner, Abernethy, Doddridge, Grove, Chandler, Gill, Orton, Furneaux, Farmer, Towgood, Robinson, and Price. Though (as enemies have suggested) it may happen that among Dissenters sufficient encouragement is not given in certain cases to men of talents and integrity, yet among their more liberal denominations, it must be confessed that a dissenting minister may, unawed by a conclave of cardinals—a bench of bishops—or a board of ministers—exercise in its fullest extent *the rights of private judgment*, which is the pride and pleasure of the human mind. In Pierce's *Vindication of the Dissenters*, Towgood's *Letters to White*, and Palmer's *Protestant Dissenter's Catechism*, are stated the grounds upon which their dissent from the established church is founded.

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## KIRK OF SCOTLAND.

THE members of the *Kirk of Scotland* are, strictly speaking, the only *Presbyterians* in Great Britain.\* Their

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\* Kirk is derived from *κυριακή*, and is the original Saxon or Teutonic word *kyrke*, a place set apart for divine worship, by a catachresis applied to the congregation who assembles together in one place, or the various congregations connected together in one communion. It is a mistake to say

mode of ecclesiastical government was brought thither from Geneva by *John Knox*, the celebrated Scottish reformer, and who has been styled the apostle of Scotland, for the same reason that Luther was called the *apostle of Germany*.

Contrary to the Episcopalians, the Presbyterians maintain that the church should be governed by Presbyteries, Synods, and General Assemblies. The title Presbyterian comes from the Greek word *πρεσβυτερος*, which signifies senior, or elder. In the kirk of Scotland there are fifteen synods and sixty-nine presbyteries. Their articles and their creed is Calvinistic, and their general assembly is held annually in the month of May at Edinburgh.

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This, which is the supreme ecclesiastical court, consists of 200 ministers and 89 lay or ruling elders, representing presbyteries ; 67 elders from royal burghs, and 5 representatives from the universities ; in all, 361 members. It is chosen annually, and has two presidents, a royal commissioner, appointed by the king, and a moderator, chosen by the meeting. The inferior courts are, first, kirk-sessions : These consist of the minister or ministers, and so many elders, selected from the most respectable inhabitants of the parish, who are solemnly ordained to

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the members of the established church are the only Presbyterians in Scotland. The Reformed Presbytery, the Seceders, and the Relief, are all Presbyterians, and ought to hold the principles of Presbyterianism in greater purity than the "corrupt kirk."

their office. The number is not limited, but they cannot be less than two : they are entrusted with the management of the poor's funds, and have, besides, a general inspection of the morals of the parishioners, and a right to administer the discipline of the church, according to established laws. Every proceeding of a kirk-session is subject to the review of the presbytery of the district, which is the court immediately above, and consists of the ministers of so many contiguous parishes, who are *ex officio* members, and of an elder from each kirk-session within the district, usually elected at the end of every six months. Its duties extend to the superintendence of the private conduct, and public teaching of the ministers of the district, to induct them to these charges, to admonish, suspend, or even deprive them, if found unqualified. The trial and induction of parish schoolmasters is likewise entrusted to the presbyteries. The Synod is the court of review immediately above the Presbytery, and consists of all the ministers and elders who stand on the roll as constituent members of so many contiguous presbyteries placed under its provincial jurisdiction, and possess, like it, an original jurisdiction on subjects of general interest—from it, by appeal, to the General Assembly, which sits both as a judicial and legislative body.\*

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\* The following has been stated as their annual incomes:—172 charges at £150; 200 at £200; 150 at £230; 150 at £250; 150 at £500; 80 at £325; 30 at £350; 28 at £400; 10 at £500; 10 at £600; and 20 at £800; which, with manse and glebe, makes the whole expense of the establishment within a trifle of £300,000 per annum.

## REFORMATION IN SCOTLAND.

## LIFE OF JOHN KNOX.

JOHN KNOX first drew breath in the village of Gifford, in the county of East Lothian, A. D. 1505. His family was respectable. He received the rudiments of his education in the grammar-school of Haddington which he completed in the University of St. Andrews, under John Mair, or Major, and in conjunction with Buchanan. Originally designed for the Romish church, he was ordained a priest before he attained the canonical age [25]; but his masculine soul threw off the fetters of a degrading superstition as soon as his inquiries led him to perceive their absurdity. At the risk of his life he professed himself a Protestant about 1542, and found refuge, as a private tutor, from the revenge of Cardinal Beatoun, in the family of Hugh Douglas of Langniddrie. On the fall of Beatoun, he was persuaded by his patrons to enter the castle of St. Andrews, where he remained till it surrendered, and shared the fate of its inmates, being sent to the French gallies. After enduring a severe and tedious imprisonment of 19 months, he was set at liberty, February 1549; and, repairing to England, was employed as a Protestant preacher in Berwick. In 1551, he was appointed one of Edward VI.'s private chaplains, and assisted in revising the English Book of Common Prayer; but, on the death of that pious youth, was forced to flee to the continent, to avoid the flames kindled by the bigotted Mary. A short time

before his departure he married Marjory Bowes, a respectable young lady, a native of Berwick. He now repaired to Geneva, where he became intimate with Calvin; then tarried for a short time at Frankfort; but upon some disputes with the exiled English, returned to Geneva; whence, 1555, he set out for Scotland, upon learning that the principles of the Reformation were making rapid progress there. His labours in his native land are identified with the history of civil and religious liberty, and have been recently so fully and ably detailed, that we shall not attempt any curtailed account of a series of exertions which his countrymen can never forget. He died, 1572; and the Regent Morton pronounced over him an imperishable epitaph, "There lies he who never feared the face of man."



THE REFORMATION IN SCOTLAND, like that in England and Germany, struggled with a long series of opposition, and was at length gloriously triumphant. Dr. *Gilbert Stewart*, therefore, closes his *History of the Reformation in North Britain* with the following animated reflections:—

"From the order and the laws of our nature it perpetually happens that advantages are mixed with misfortune. The conflicts which led to a purer religion, while they excite under one aspect the liveliest transports of joy, create in another a mournful sentiment of sympathy and compassion. Amidst the felicities which were obtained, and the trophies which were won, we deplore the melancholy ravages of the passions, and weep over the ruins of ancient magnificence. But while the



contentions and the ferments of men, even in the road to improvements and excellence, are ever destined to be polluted with mischief and blood ; a tribute of the highest panegyric and praise is yet justly to be paid to the actors in the Reformation. They gave way to the movements of a liberal and resolute spirit. They taught the rulers of nations that the obedience of the subject is the child of justice, and that men must be governed by their opinions and their reason. This magnanimity is illustrated by great and conspicuous exploits, which at the same time that they awaken admiration, are an example to support and animate virtue in the hour of trial and peril. The existence of civil liberty was deeply connected with the doctrines for which they contended and fought. While they treated with scorn an abject and a cruel superstition, and lifted and sublimed the dignity of man, by calling his attention to a simpler and a wiser theology, they were strenuous to give a permanent security to the political constitution of their state. The happiest and the best interests of society were the objects for which they buckled on their armour, and to wish and to act for their duration and stability, are perhaps the most important employments of patriotism and public affection. The *Reformation* may suffer fluctuations in its forms, but, for the good and the prosperity of mankind, it is to be hoped that it is never to yield and to submit to the errors and the superstitions it overwhelmed."



At the time of the Reformation, the nobility and gentry of Scotland were at the head of the reformers ; and

though the ministers had great influence, the landholders first, and ultimately the crown, never lost sight of the patrimony of the church they overturned, nor of its power. The Presbyterian government, the original form, was established during the minority of James VI.; but the whole of his own administration consisted of attempts to overturn it, and erect a hierarchy. His accession to the English throne gave him an overwhelming influence; and he had nearly succeeded in his darling scheme when he died. Charles I. urging a liturgy, undid the whole, and Presbytery became triumphantly the covenanted religion of the land, to the exclusion of every other. Cromwell tolerated all Protestants; and the Presbyterians sighed for the return of a covenanted king and Presbyterian supremacy. Charles II. was restored, and prelacy was established,\* on which a horrible scene of blood and persecution ensued, which lasted till the Revolution, when Presbytery was restored; but other sects were tolerated. Since then it has remained the established religion of Scotland, and has been professed by an immense majority of the inhabitants; the chief subject of difference being—LAY PATRONAGE. It is well known that the idea of patronage, or the right of presenting to church benefices, took its rise from the canon

\* So averse, however, were the Scots to the Episcopalians, and so harsh were the measures of the Episcopalian party, that the whole country was thrown into confusion. Leighton, the most pious and moderate prelate amongst them, disgusted with the proceedings of his brethren, resigned his bishoprick, and told the king, "He would not have a hand in such oppressive measures, were he sure to plant the Christian religion in an infidel country by them; much less when they tended only to alter the form of church government."

law, which, even before the Reformation, was never completely established in Scotland. In the second book of discipline adopted in 1578, and recorded in 1580, the General Assembly declared, "that patronages and presentations to benefices had flowed from the Pope, and corruption of the canon law, only in so far as thereby any person was intruded or placed over kirks having *curam animarum* [the care of souls];" and at the same time claimed, that, in Scotland, "none should be intruded upon any congregation, either by the prince or any inferior person, without lawful election and the assent of the people over whom the person is placed." Nevertheless the crown, and the nobles who had seized the lands, gradually usurped the power of the Papists, and presented to livings. The practice was abolished in 1649; like numerous evils, it came back with Charles II. was alleviated at the Revolution, revived under Queen Anne, and, at this day, reigns in all its pristine vigour, it having been lately found that even a Papist could present to a Protestant kirk; a decision which occasioned very little discussion with regard to its religious bearings, although such a phenomenon once would have shaken the land from the one end to the other.

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## THE REFORMED SYNOD.

THESE represent the Presbyterians of the purest times of Presbytery, retaining or bearing testimony to the com-

plete work of Reformation, as finally settled in that brightest day of the church of Scotland's brightest season—the second glorious Reformation of 1649. In enumerating, therefore, the principles they profess, we enumerate what ought to be the principles of all who claim the title of Presbyterian, at least of all who affect to glory in the struggle that was made in the mountains and muirs of Caledonia, for the rights, liberties, and religion of their country. This body is known by a variety of titles, or, as they say themselves, “nicknames,” Whigs, Cameronians, Mountain-men, &c. &c. These were once titles of reproach, but those days have passed by. They are now known more commonly by the name of Cameronians, from the Rev. Richard Cameron, who fell at Airmoss, in Kyle, 1680; or covenanters, from adhering to that famous bond of union. The Roman Catholics and Episcopalians boast of the more than doubtful regular order of apostolic succession; the Cameronians clearly trace their lineal descent from the original professors and martyrs of the Scottish church; but what they esteem of more consequence, they hold fast their faith. At the Revolution 1688, they were deserted by their pastors, who chose to comply with the principles of the times, and own an authority in the church which the more strict covenanting people believed to be a sinful compliance. They had, during days of darkness and peril, contended for the supreme headship of Christ in his church, and they could not in days of ease submit to surrender what they and their fathers had striven for in the high places of the field. Patronage in any shape they resisted; and although they allowed the right of

Christian magistrates to hold a place in Christian churches, according to the covenant, they could not bow to any undue or Erastian interference. For some time they remained without regular ministers, till, after various vicissitudes, on the 1st of August 1743, Mr. Mac-Millan and Mr. Nairne, with some ruling elders, who had been regularly ordained, “formed and constituted a presbytery in the name of Christ, the alone king and head of his church, under the title of the REFORMED PRESBYTERY.” This title [now SYNOD, from the increase of their numbers], they still bear, “not,” as they modestly say, “that they consider themselves as better than other men, or as having in their own persons arrived at higher degrees of perfection, such thoughts they never entertained, but purely for this reason, that it is at least their honest intention faithfully to adhere to the whole Reformation attainments both in church and state, without knowingly dropping any part of these;” “and, having obtained help of God, they continue to this day witnessing none other things than what many thousands in the *once* famous and reformed church of Scotland have witnessed before them.” The principles and history of these representatives of the primitive covenanters may be found in “A Short Account of the Old Presbyterian Dissenters,” &c. published by authority of the Reformed Synod; to which, as being both concise and satisfactory, I refer. It may be had at the Publisher of this work, price one shilling. There are three presbyteries in this connection, consisting of thirty-two congregations.

## SECEDERS.

DISSENTERS from the Kirk or Church of Scotland, call themselves *Seceders* ; for as the term *Dissenter* comes from the Latin word, *dissentio*, to differ, so the appellation *Seceder* is derived from another Latin word *secedo*, to separate or to withdraw from any body of men with which we may have been united. The Seceders are rigid Calvinists, rather austere in their manners, and in their discipline. Through a difference as to civil matters they are broken down into *Burghers* and *Anti-burghers*. Of these two classes the latter are the most confined in their sentiments, and associate therefore the least with any other body of Christians. The *Seceders* originated under two brothers, Ralph and Ebenezer Erskine, about the year 1730. It is worthy of observation, that the Rev. G. Whitefield, in one of his visits to Scotland, was solemnly reprobated by the *Seceders*, because he refused to confine his itinerant labours *wholly* to them. The reason assigned for this monopolization was, that they were EXCLUSIVELY *God's people* ! Mr. Whitefield smartly replied, that *they* had therefore the *less need* of his services, for *his* aim was to turn *sinner*s from the error and wickedness of their ways by preaching among *them*, glad tidings of great joy !

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The causes of the secession, were many material differences both in doctrine and discipline. The Seceders accused the Church of Scotland of retaining in her bosom,

and bearing with ministers who favoured the scheme of Arminius, and who were lax and defective in their parochial duties, but chiefly of imposing upon the people, as their pastors, men to whom they were totally averse, and from whose ministrations, of course, they could expect no benefit—of departing from the principles for which their fathers had so strenuously contended, by supporting the system of patronage—and of harshness and tyrannical conduct to the godly men who wished to revert, as nearly as possible, to the primitive practice of the Scottish church. The two parties, Burghers and Antiburghers, are now united, and form one body. The UNITED ASSOCIATE SYNOD of the Secession Church consist of nineteen presbyteries, containing upwards of three hundred congregations.

There are, besides these, two divisions of Seceders, who remain separate, chiefly differing from their brethren with regard to the power of the civil magistrate in religious matters, and the binding obligation of the covenants. The first style themselves the ASSOCIATE SYNOD OF ORIGINAL SECEDERS, which consists of four presbyteries, and has under its inspection thirty three congregations; the other, THE ORIGINAL BURGHER ASSOCIATE SYNOD, five presbyteries, with fifty-five congregations.

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## RELIEF SYNOD.

THIS body arose in consequence of Mr. Thomas Gillespie, minister of Carnook, in the presbytery of Dun-

fermline, being forcibly thrust out of the Church of Scotland, because he would not be present at what he could not in conscience approve, the violent intrusion of a Mr. Andrew Richardson to the charge of Inverkeithing. Being joined by Mr. Thomas Boston, minister of Oxnam, and afterwards by a Mr. Collier, they formed themselves into a RELIEF PRESBYTERY, solely for the purpose of relieving congregations from having ministers to whom they were averse forced upon them; in nothing else did they profess to differ from the Church of Scotland. They consist of seven presbyteries, and ninety-five congregations; but it has been alleged that their increase has been owing greatly of late to the laxity of their church discipline, which is even less rigorous, with regard to drunkenness or fornication, either on the part of pastors or people, than that of the old mother church herself. In abhorrence, however, of instrumental music, they may vie with the strictest of the strict; and the introduction of an organ into one of their chapels in Edinburgh occasioned the withdrawing of one of the ablest and most popular ministers from their connection. As the case is curious, I subjoin it in a note.\*

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\* Instrumental music, it is well known, formed a delightful part of the temple service. In the New Testament it is no where forbidden, but is even symbolically represented as increasing the enjoyment of heaven. It has been admitted into almost all the Protestant churches abroad; and, in England, is employed not only by the Episcopalians, but by the Presbyterians, and other dissenters. In Scotland alone it has been rejected with horror; yet even there it has never been pronounced *a sin* by any of the constitutions of the church, the Seceders, or the Dissenters—it has on the worst side only been considered inexpedient. Mr. Johnstone's congregation in Roxburgh Street viewed the case somewhat differently; they consider-



## ENGLISH PRESBYTERIANS.

BUT the appellation *Presbyterian* is in England appropriated to a large denomination of Dissenters, who

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ed it advisable, perhaps ; and, along with many congregations in Scotland, contemplating an improvement in the Psalmody as highly requisite, they instead of hiring what is called "a Band," preferred the assistance of an "Instrument." This decision, harmless at least, if not praiseworthy, was the unanimous act of the people, in which their pastor wisely acquiesced ; but the other congregations of Relief in Edinburgh, either not able to afford the expense, or from the remains of old prejudice, or some other less defensible cause, instantly raised the hue and cry, as if the vilest heresy had been introduced. The case came before the Edinburgh Presbytery, when it was proposed to delay, and attempt conciliatory measures ; but it was carried by the violent anti-organists to the Synod ; and the collective wisdom of that reverend conclave, without either hearing Mr. Johnstone or his congregation, decreed, "That the Rev. John Johnstone be enjoined *instantly* to give up the organ, or have his name struck off the roll of the Edinburgh Presbytery,"—a decree of which it is impossible to say whether folly or tyranny be the most revolting feature. Mr. Johnstone immediately gave in his resignation, refusing to hold connection with a society which had so grievously outraged every regular legal proceeding ; but the Presbytery crowned the climax of absurdity, by striking Mr. Johnstone off a roll, whence he had already struck himself.—Had not that Synod and that Presbytery belonged to a body, from whose professed principles more moderation, forbearance, and freedom of conscience, might have been expected than any other, the melancholy contrast between the law of liberty and the law of love, and the more than even priestly despotism they exercised, and the more than common disregard of Christian feeling and brotherly kindness they evinced, would not have appeared in such dark and deep relief ; but as it is, it speaks woefully for their progress in knowledge or liberality in this advancing age. The organ, however, maintains its place, and the minister and his congregation go on prosperously together ; nor is it improbable but their example may be followed ; and, indeed, from the abuse of "Bands," in some instances, it is perhaps desirable that it should. In Roxburgh Street chapel the congregation sing with the organ, in some other chapels and churches the "Bands" sing alone. What renders the whole of this procedure most strange is, that, by one of the fundamental articles of the Relief Association, they were to hold communion with Episcopalians ! in whose worship the organ is indispensable !

have no attachment to the Scottish mode of church government, any more than to Episcopacy amongst us, and therefore to this body of Christians the term Presbyterian in its original sense is improperly applied. How this misapplication came to pass cannot be easily determined, but it has occasioned many wrong notions, and should therefore be rectified.\* English Presbyterians, as they are called, adopt the same mode of church government with the Independents, which is the next sect to be mentioned. Their chief difference from the Independents is, that they are less attached to Calvinism, and consequently admit a greater latitude of religious sentiment.†

Dr. Doddridge in his lectures has this paragraph on the subject, which may serve still further for its illustration. "Those who hold every *pastor* to be as a bishop or overseer of his own congregation, so that no other person or body of men have by divine institution a power to exercise any superior or pastoral office in it, may, properly speaking, be called (so far at least) *congregational*; and it is by a vulgar mistake that any such are called *Presbyterians*, for the *Presbyterian* discipline is exercised by *synods* and *assemblies*, subordinate to each other, and all of them subject to the authority of what is commonly called a *General Assembly*." This mode of church government is to be found in Scotland, and has been already detailed under a former article in this work.

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\* It can very easily be determined. During the commonwealth, Presbyterianism was established by act of Parliament.

† A great number of their congregations profess Socinian principles.

## INDEPENDENTS.

THE *Independents*, or *Congregationalists*, deny not only the subordination of the clergy, but also all *dependency* on other assemblies. Every congregation (say they) has in itself what is necessary for its own government, and is not subject to other churches or to their deputies. Thus this *independency* of one church with respect to another has given rise to the appellation *Independents*; though this mode of church government is adopted by the Dissenters in general. The *Independents* have been improperly confounded with the *Brownists*, for though they may have originally sprung from them, they excel them in the moderation of their sentiments, and in the order of their discipline. The first Independent or Congregational Church in England was established by a Mr. Jacob, in the year 1616; though a Mr. Robinson appears to have been the founder of this sect.

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## BROWNISTS.

THE *Brownists*, which have been just mentioned, were the followers of *Robert Brown*, a clergyman of the church of England, who lived about 1600. He inveighed against the ceremonies and discipline of the church, separated himself from her communion, and afterwards returned into her bosom. He appears to have been a persecuted man, of violent passions. He died in North-

ampton goal, 1630, after boasting that he had been committed to thirty-two prisons, in some of which he could not see his hand at noon day !

Before we proceed to the Baptists, it will be necessary just to remark, that *all* persons who *baptize infants*, are denominated *Pædobaptists*, from the Greek word, which signifies *child* or *infant*. Of course the Established Church, the Presbyterians both in Scotland and England, together with the Independents are all *Pædobaptists*; that is, baptizers of infants or children. Their reasons for this practice are to be found in Wall, Towgood, Addington, Williams, Horsey, and others, who have expressly written on the subject with learning and ingenuity. They rest their arguments principally on the following circumstances: That baptism has succeeded instead of the rite of circumcision; that *households*, probably (say they) including children, were baptized; that Jesus shewed an affectionate regard for children; and, finally, that it is the means of impressing the minds of parents with a sense of the duties which they owe their offspring, upon the right discharge of which depend the welfare and happiness of the rising generation.\* Persons, therefore, engage themselves as *sponsors* in the Established Church, who promise that they will take care of the morals of the children; among other sects the *parents* are made answerable, who indeed are the most proper persons to undertake the arduous task, and to see it duly accomplished. These preliminary remarks were necessary to render a sketch of the *Baptists* the more intel-

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\* The most unanswerable of all the arguments are derived from the Abrahamic covenant.

ligible. We shall now therefore proceed to the denomination.

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## BAPTISTS.\*

THE *Baptists* are distinguished from other denominations respecting the *mode* and *subject* of baptism. They contend that this ordinance should be administered by *immersion* only, which indeed is enjoined, though not practised, by the church of England. They also assert, that it should be administered to those alone who *profess* their belief in the Christian religion, and their determination of regulating their lives by its precepts. Some of the learned, however, suppose that the controversy is not so properly whether infants or adults should be baptized, as whether the rite should be administered on the profession of our *own* faith, or that of *another's* faith. See *Letters addressed to Bishop Hoadley*, by the late Mr. Foot, a General Baptist at Bristol.

The Baptists are divided into the *General*, who are Arminians, and into the *Particular*, who are Calvinists. Some of both classes allow *mixed communion*, by which is understood, that those who have not been baptized by *immersion* on the profession of their faith (but in their infancy, which *they* themselves deem *valid*) may sit down at the Lord's table along with those who have been thus baptized. This has given rise to some little controversy on the subject. Mr. Killingworth and Mr. Abraham Booth have written against free communion, but honest

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\* A misnomer.—Whoever is baptized, either by sprinkling or immersion, infant or adult, is a *Baptist*.

John Bunyan, Dr. Foster, Mr. Charles Bulkely, Mr. John Wiche, for many years a respectable General Baptist minister, at Maidstone, and Mr. Robinson, of Cambridge, have strenuously contended for it. It is deeply to be regretted that such disputes should ever have arisen, since they have contributed in no small degree to injure the repose, and retard the prosperity of the Christian Church.

The *General* Baptists have, in some of their churches, three distinct orders, separately ordained—*Messengers*, *Elders*, and *Deacons* ; and their *General Assembly* is held annually in *Worship Street, London*, on the *Tuesday in the Whitsun Week* ; it used to be on the Wednesday, but is changed for the convenience of ministers, who attend it from the country. They have thus met together for upwards of a century. Dr. John Gale, a learned General Baptist, had a famous controversy, in the beginning of this century, with Dr. Wall, who defended the practice of baptizing infants. But there has been a more recent controversy on the subject, between Mr. Abraham Booth, and Dr. Williams. The appellation *Anabaptist*, which comes from two Greek words, and signifies to *re-baptize*, is sometimes applied to this denomination of Christians. But this is an unjust accusation brought against them by their adversaries, and being deemed a term of reproach, ought to be wholly laid aside. See Dr. Rippon's *Baptist Register*. The late Mr. Robinson published a very valuable work, entitled, *The History of Baptism*.

The administration of baptism to *adults* by *immersion*, has been the subject of so much ridicule and misrepre-

sentation, that an account of it, taken from the latter work, shall be inserted, for the information of the serious reader. “The English and most foreign Baptists consider a *personal profession of faith*, and an *immersion* in water, essential to baptism. The profession of faith is generally made before the church at a church meeting. Some have a creed, and expect the candidate to assent to it, and to give a circumstantial account of his conversion. Others only require a person to profess himself a Christian. The former generally consider baptism as an ordinance, which initiates persons into a particular church; and they say, without breach of Christian liberty, they have a right to expect an agreement in articles of faith in their own societies. The latter only think baptism initiates into a profession of the Christian religion in general, and therefore say they have no right to require an assent to *our* creed of such as do not purpose to join our churches. They quote the baptism of the Eunuch, in the 8th of Acts, in proof. There are some who have no public faith, and who both administer baptism and admit to church membership any who profess themselves Christians. They administer baptism in their own baptisteries, and in public waters.”

“Not many years ago at Whittlesford, seven miles from Cambridge, forty-eight persons were baptized in that ford of the river from which the village takes its name. At ten o'clock of a very fine morning in May, about 1500 people of different ranks assembled together. At half past ten in the forenoon, the late Dr. Andrew Gifford, Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries, Sub-librarian of the British Museum, and teacher of a Baptist

congregation in Eagle Street, London, ascended a moveable pulpit in a large open court-yard, near the river, and adjoining to the house of the Lord of the manor. Round him stood the congregation ; people on horse-back, in coaches, and in carts, formed the outside semicircle : many other persons sitting in the rooms of the house, the sashes being open, all were uncovered, and there was a profound silence. The doctor first gave out a hymn, which the congregation sung. Then he prayed. Prayer ended, he took out a New Testament, and read his text—*I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance*. He observed, that the force of the preposition had escaped the notice of the translators, and that the true reading was—I indeed *baptize* or dip you *in* water *at* or *upon* repentance ; which sense he confirmed by the 41st verse of the 12th of Matthew, and other passages. Then he spoke as most Baptists do on these occasions, concerning the *nature, subject, mode, and end* of this ordinance. He closed, by contrasting the doctrine of infant sprinkling with that of believer's baptism, which being a part of Christian obedience, was supported by divine promises, on the accomplishment of which, all good men might depend. After sermon, he read another hymn and prayed, and then came down. Then the candidates for baptism retired, to prepare themselves.

About half an hour after, the administrator, who that day was a nephew of the doctor's, and admirably qualified for the work, in a long black gown of fine baize, without a hat, with a small New Testament in his hand, came down to the river side, accompanied by several Baptist ministers and deacons of their churches, and the per-



sons to be baptized. The men came first, two and two, without hats, and dressed as usual, except that instead of coats, each had on a long white baize gown, tied round the waist with a sash. Such as had no hair, wore white cotton or linen caps. The women followed the men, two and two, all dressed neat, clean, and plain, and their gowns white linen or dimity. It was said, the garments had knobs of lead at bottom, to make them sink. Each had a long light silk cloak hanging loosely over his shoulder, a broad ribband tied over her gown beneath the breast, and a hat on her head. They all ranged themselves around the administrator at the water side. A great number of spectators stood on the banks of the river on both sides; some had climbed and sat on the trees, many sat on horseback and in carriages, and all behaved with a decent seriousness, which did honour to the good sense and the good manners of the assembly, as well as to the free constitution of this country. First, the administrator read an hymn, which the people sung. Then he read that portion of scripture which is read in the Greek church on the same occasion, the history of the baptism of the Eunuch, beginning at the 26th verse, and ending with the 39th. About ten minutes he stood expounding the verses, and then taken one of the men by the hand, he led him into the water, saying as he went, *See here is water, what doth hinder? If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayst be baptized.* When he came to a sufficient depth, he stopped, and with the utmost composure placing himself on the left hand of the man, his face being towards the man's shoulder, he put his right hand between his shoulders behind, gathering into it

a little of the gown for hold : the fingers of his left hand he thrust under the sash before, and the man putting his two thumbs into that hand, he locked all together, by closing his hand. Then he deliberately said, *I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost ;* and while he uttered these words standing wide, he gently leaned him backward, and dipped him once. As soon as he had raised him, a person in a boat fastened there for the purpose, took hold of the man's hand, wiped his face with a napkin, and led him a few steps to another attendant, who then gave his arm, walked with him to the house, and assisted him to dress. There were many such in waiting, who like the primitive susceptors, assisted during the whole service. The rest of the men followed the first, and were baptized in like manner. After them the women were baptized. A female friend took off at the water side the hat and cloak. A deacon of the church led one to the administrator, and another from him ; and a woman at the water side took each as she came out of the river, and conducted her to the apartment in the house, where they dressed themselves. When all were baptized, the administrator coming up out of the river, and standing at the side, gave a short exhortation on the honour and the pleasure of obedience to divine commands, and then with the usual benediction dismissed the assembly. About half an hour after, the men newly baptized, having dressed themselves, went from their room into a large hall in the house, where they were presently joined by the women, who came from their apartments to the same place. Then they sent a messenger to the administrator, who was

dressing in his apartment, to inform him they waited for him. He presently came, and first prayed for a few minutes, and then closed the whole by a short discourse on the blessings of civil and religious liberty, the sufficiency of Scripture, the pleasures of a good conscience, the importance of a holy life, and the prospect of a blessed immortality. This they call a *public baptism*.”

A more *private baptism* takes place after a similar manner in *baptisteries*, which are in or near the places of worship; thus every convenience is afforded for the purpose. This, indeed, is now the most common way of administering the ordinance among the Baptists, either with the attendance of friends or in the presence of the congregation. Such is *baptism by immersion*, and thus conducted, it must be pronounced significant in its nature, and impressive in its tendency. It is, however, to be wished, that the rite was on *every* occasion administered with equal solemnity.

The propriety of the exclusive appellation of the term *Baptists* to those who baptize *adults by immersion*, has been questioned. Hence they are by many stiled *Anti-pædobaptists*, merely as opposing the validity of infant baptism. An account of the manner in which *infant baptism* is administered, should have been added, were it not so well known by its general practice, both in the Established Church and among Dissenters.

The three denominations of *Protestant Dissenters* have seminaries of their own, where young men designed for the Christian ministry are educated. Amongst the Presbyterians are to be reckoned the academies at Manchester, and Caernarthen, in South Wales; besides six ex-

hibitions granted by Dr. Daniel Williams, to English Presbyterian students, to be educated at Glasgow. Among the Independents are to be mentioned the academies at Wymondley House near Hitchin, Homerton, Wrexham, and Hoxton. There is also an academy of Lady Huntingdon's, formerly at Trevecka, now at Cheshunt. The Baptists have two exhibitions for students to be educated at one of the universities in Scotland, given them by Dr Ward, of Gresham College, the author of *The System of Oratory*.\* There is likewise an academy at Bristol, generally known by the name of *The Bristol Education Society*, over which the late Dr. Caleb Evans and his venerable father, the Rev. Hugh Evans, A. M. presided for many years with great respectability. A similar institution, though upon a much smaller scale, has been formed among the *General Baptists*, which it is to be hoped will meet with due encouragement. They could formerly boast of a *Gale*, a *Foster*, a *Burroughs*, a *Foot*, a *Noble*, and a *Bulkely*. A learned education lays the foundation for a respectable Christian ministry. In Dr. Kippis's *Life of Dr. Doddridge*, prefixed to the

\* As the author of this little work stands indebted to the Exhibition of *Dr. John Ward*, he wishes to pay a grateful tribute of respect to his memory. He was the son of a Dissenting minister, and born about 1679, in London. He kept an academy for many years in Tenter Alley, Moorfields. In 1720, he was chosen professor of Rhetoric in Gresham College, where his *System of Oratory* was delivered. In 1723, during the Presidency of Sir Isaac Newton, he was elected Fellow of the Royal Society: and in 1752, chosen one of its Vice-Presidents, in which office he continued till his death, which happened at Gresham College, October 17, 1758, in the eightieth year of his age. He published many learned works; and is allowed by all who *knew* him, to have been a character in which were united a diffusive benevolence and a rational piety.

seventh edition of his *Family Expositor*, will be found an account of the general mode of education for ministers among the Dissenters.

Mr. Palmer, in his *Nonconformist's Memorial*, speaking of Dr Daniel Williams, says—"He gave the bulk of his estate to charitable uses, as excellent in their nature as various in their kinds, and as much calculated for the glory of God, and the good of mankind, as any that have ever been known. He left his library for public use, and ordered a convenient place to be purchased or erected, in which the books might be properly disposed of, and left an annuity for a librarian. A commodious house was accordingly erected in *Redcross-street, Cripplegate*, where his collection of books is not only properly preserved, but has been gradually receiving large additions. This is also the place in which the body of dissenting ministers meet to transact their business, and is a kind of repository for paintings of Nonconformist ministers, for MSS. and others matters of curiosity or utility." The building itself belongs to the *Presbyterians*, but it is by the trustees handsomely devoted to the use of the dissenters in general. The library in *Redcross-street*, since its original endowment, has been augmented by the donations of liberal minded persons, and its increase depends upon their zeal : no part of the founder's estate being appropriated for the purpose. Were every dissenting author to send thither a copy of his publications (a measure that has been recommended and ought to be adopted), the collection would soon receive a considerable augmentation, and of course increase not only in extent but also in respectability. A second edition of the catalogue, in one volume, octavo,

has been lately published, with the rules respecting the use of it, prefixed.

Near to this spot also stands *Sion College*, founded by Dr. Thomas White, and of which a particular account is given in Northouck's *History of London*. Here the *London clergy* meet to transact their affairs, and it is enriched with an extensive library, and ample endowments.

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## SCOTTISH INDEPENDENTS.

IN the year 1797, when missionary exertions for carrying the gospel to the heathens were strongly advocated, the question being often tauntingly asked by opposers, have we no heathens at home? it occurred to some private individuals to give a practical answer; and accordingly Messrs James Haldane, John Aikman, and Joseph Rait, who had previously preached in the villages around Edinburgh, after having been recommended to God and set apart by prayer, at a meeting of some friends, of whom the Rev. David Black, minister of Lady Yester's Church, was one, set out upon an itinerancy to the north of Scotland, to preach and distribute tracts.

The interest created by this expedition, and the publication of their tour, was great; and the opposition of the regular clergy proportionable, as the persons who had thus acted were laymen, as the term is. This was still farther increased, when, after their return to Edinburgh, they commenced preaching in the circus hired for this purpose, and formed a society for promoting the gospel at home.

As the country was now in a complete state of excite-

ment, never fairer opportunity offered for doing extensive good, and a circumstance occurred at the same time which seemed to secure it ; but vain are the schemes and anticipations of men ; what was thought to be a remarkable interposition of Providence, was destined to destroy, not to build up the fair fabric.

Robert Haldane, Esq. of Airthry had sold his estate, and induced the Rev. Mr. Innes of Stirling, and G. Ewing of Lady Glenorchy's Chapel, to engage to accompany him on a mission to India. Government, who had received very unfavourable reports of this gentleman's political sentiments, refused to allow the proposed mission to proceed ; and he, thus disappointed, directed all his energies to promote the rising project at home. His wealth gave him a degree of influence totally inconsistent with the principles of Christian society, [James ch. ii. v. 2—4] though very seldom resisted, but which, in this case, may be perhaps extenuated, as his zeal appeared so very disinterested and pure. Cut off as the itinerants or missionaries, as they were called, were from the church of Scotland, they were forced to form separate churches, and a plan being formed upon that of the London Tabernacle, he built Tabernacles at Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Dundee, of immense size ; others, lesser, at Perth and Dumfries. He established a seminary for the instruction of preachers ; and he was forward in every good work, wherever a chapel was to be erected, or a church to be formed.

The Tabernacles thus opened were at first conducted upon the principles of free communion, and a regular communication with the English Independent ministers ; and

the success was amazing. The crowds which attended were immense ; and the almost universal opinion of the country appeared to be in favour of this new way. But these days soon passed away, Mr. Haldane changed his views, and he naturally expected that those who had hitherto received his *dicta* as oracular, should still continue so to do. They ventured to differ ; and a separation, not the most agreeable, took place. Mr. James Haldane and some few continued with Mr. R. Haldane to progress, till they became insulated from all other Christian societies, and are now a kind of non-descript BAPTISTS.

The great majority, who were not susceptible of such rapid improvement, have retained nearly the sentiments they originally adopted, and have lately formed themselves into a CONGREGATIONAL UNION OF INDEPENDENT CHURCHES.\* In civil affairs, they believe it to be the duty of Christians to submit to the powers that be, and even carry their doctrine of obedience and non-resistance to a very disputable length. In religious matters they own no authority but that of the word of God, and believe all interference of the magistrate in the church of Christ as totally inadmissible. They acknowledge no connection between church and state, but consider that wherever it does exist, it does harm rather than good to the cause of pure and undefiled religion. In their form of church government, they assert the entire completeness of each separate church for all the purposes of order and discipline, and admit of no foreign interference.

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\* So styled in the Almanack.



The office-bearers are a pastor or pastors for teaching and administration of the ordinances, and deacons for taking care of the poor. The members are such as make a credible and consistent profession of religion.

Their tenets are what are termed Calvinistical, but they have no formal confession of faith. Their infants are baptized, and the ordinance of the Lord's Supper is administered the first day of every week, they believing that the same authority which changed the observance of the Sabbath authorises this. The union of the churches is merely for the sake of mutual aid and fellowship in promoting the cause of the gospel. The number of churches in the connection is eighty-two

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To the foregoing *systematical* distribution of the several denominations, shall be added a FEW SECTS, which cannot be classed with propriety under any one of the three general divisions which have been adopted.

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## FRIENDS, OR QUAKERS.

THE Society of Friends, usually called Quakers,\* arose about the middle of the seventeenth century. Their

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\* This name was first given them, tauntingly, by a justice of peace in Derbyshire, on George Fox's bidding him, and those about him, tremble at the word of the Lord.

first preacher, and the person by whose instrumentality they were gathered as a distinct church, was George Fox, who was born at Drayton in the Clay, in Leicestershire, A. D. 1624. When quite a young lad, he was of a thoughtful and serious turn, much accustomed to reading the Scriptures, meditation and prayer; and before he had attained the age of twenty, he was so deeply convinced of sin, as to undergo a condition of extreme mental conflict. During this period of painful exercise of mind, which appears to have lasted for two or three years, he was often led to reflect on the sufferings of Jesus Christ; and the following conversation, recorded in his journal as having taken place in his 21st year, affords a striking evidence of his early acquaintance with the fundamental doctrines of Christianity. "The priest Stevens asked me why Christ cried out upon the cross, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' and why he said, 'If it be possible, let this cup pass from me, yet not my will, but thine be done.' I told him; at that time the sins of all mankind were upon him, and their iniquities and transgressions with which he was wounded; which he was to bear and be an offering for, as he was man, but died not, as he was God; so, in that he died for all men, tasting death for every man, he was an offering for the sins of the whole world. This I spoke, being at that time in measure sensible of Christ's sufferings. The priest said; it was a very good, full answer, and such an one as he had not heard."—Fox's Journal, fol. ed. p. 4.

Soon after this period, George Fox began to travel in the capacity of a preacher of the gospel. Deeply im-

pressed himself with the spirituality of true religion, and of the inefficacy of all merely human systems in promoting the great work of salvation, he felt himself impelled to call on his fellow men, to forsake their dependence on such systems, and to place their reliance only on Christ, the Mediator between God and man, whose blood cleanses from all sin, and whose Spirit guides into all righteousness.

His preaching was attended with astonishing success; for there were at that time, in various parts of England, a number of serious persons dissatisfied with those outward forms of religion to which they had been accustomed, and prepared by their own experience, to embrace those spiritual views of religion which George Fox was engaged in promulgating. These persons now forsook the established modes of worship, and sat down together from time to time, and especially on the first day of the week, to wait on the Lord *in silence*. While thus engaged in worshipping Him who is a Spirit, "*in spirit and in truth*," they were frequently permitted to feel the influence of his love and power. Many amongst them became ministers of the gospel, and under a strong impression of duty, they followed the example of George Fox in travelling over the country, and in calling the attention of their hearers to the teaching of the Spirit of Christ in the secret of the heart. Meetings of Friends were, in the course of a few years, established in almost every part of England, and in many places in Scotland and Ireland.

One principle, advocated by the new Society was, that human learning, though highly valuable in itself,

is altogether insufficient to make a minister of the gospel—that the preparation of grace in the heart, and a divine call, are indispensable to the work of the ministry—and that the gift of publicly preaching or praying ought never to be exercised, except under the immediate influence of the Holy Spirit. They considered this gift to be free in its very nature, incapable of being purchased or hired by man, or of being exercised, at fixed and stated times, according to man's appointment. Hence it followed, that when in their religious assemblies, the gift was not, as they believed, called forth into exercise by the great Head of the Church, they continued during the whole time of their meeting in silence. It is recorded in the early history of the Society, that during their silent worship, they were sometimes so broken by the Lord's power, that the floors of their meeting-houses were wetted with their tears. It appears however that a lively ministry was, at that period, generally heard in their meetings; and the work devolved then, as it does now, on the women as well as the men. The Society of Friends dare not make any distinction in this respect, because they consider it the sole prerogative of the great Head of the Church, to call into his service, whomsoever he sees meet for it. Nor can they fail to call to mind both the history of the day of Pentecost (Acts ii.) and the words of ancient prophecy on this particular subject: “And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and *your daughters* shall prophecy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: and also up-

on the servants and upon the *handmaids* in those days will I pour out my Spirit.”—Joel ii. 28, 29.

It is erroneously supposed that Friends reject baptism and the Lord’s Supper. It is true that they disuse the outward ceremonies as now practised among Christians, in the belief that mere typical ordinances do not correspond with the spirituality of Christian worship. But they hold that *Christ’s baptism*, which is with the Holy Ghost and fire (*see* Matt. iii. 11.), is absolutely essential to membership in his church, as well as to the soul’s salvation. Equally essential, for these high purposes, do they regard a spiritual participation by faith, in the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.—(*See* John vi. 53—63.

Besides these views which have respect to the worship of God, the Society of Friends, from their first origin to the present day, have believed it to be their Christian duty to adopt a line of conduct, in some matters of a moral and practical nature, different from that which is generally pursued by the professors of the Christian name. Calling to mind the plain precept of our Saviour, “Swear not at all,” they make it a point of conscience to refrain from all use of oaths, not only on trifling occasions, but even in courts of justice; and they have often been exposed, in consequence, to very serious hardships, both in their persons and their property. Again, since our Saviour’s law, “Love your enemies,” is, under every possible circumstance, of perpetual obligation, they conceive it to be their duty to abstain from all participation in *warfare*, whether offensive or defensive. They consider themselves bound by the moral

code of the great Head of the Church, to suffer wrong rather than to avenge it; and although the zeal of some of their early controversial writers, sometimes carried them beyond the bounds of Christian charity and moderation, it may truly be said, that in every period of their history, Friends, considered as a body, have been a harmless and inoffensive people.

As they deem it irreverent to address to their fellow creatures, those acts of honour and obeisance, which they are accustomed to use in their approaches to the Most High, they refuse to kneel before kings and governors, or to take off the hat in honour of man. They have also ever regarded it as a Christian duty to avoid all merely complimentary forms of speech, and to follow the example of Christ and his apostles, in addressing single individuals by pronouns in the singular number—thus adhering to the language of simplicity and truth. They give *numerical* names to the months and days of the week, objecting to those in common use, as being mostly derived from the names of heathen deities, and hence, having their origin in superstition. In their dress likewise they are somewhat peculiar, as they do not consider it right to follow the vain and changeable fashions of the world, but have always been distinguished by a plain garb.

Innocent and Christian as are these several peculiarities both in worship and conduct, they were the means of exposing the early Friends to violent and long continued persecution. The high professors of those days were exceedingly provoked, by not receiving from them the homage to which they had been accustomed, and es-

pecially by their steadfast and uniform refusal to pay tithes. For these demands they were willing quietly to suffer a legal restraint, but they dared not take any *active* part in upholding a system so entirely opposed to their own principles. Their conscientious objection to all swearing was also made a frequent pretext for persecution; and their steady perseverance in meeting publicly together for divine worship, called down upon them the vengeance of the law, which at one time forbade all such meetings, except within the pale of the established church. Multitudes of them were thrown into prison during both the commonwealth and the reign of Charles II., and all parties seemed to unite in trampling on this suffering but innocent people. Yet in the midst of their sorrows and perplexities, they continued boldly to proclaim the spirituality of the gospel dispensation, and often, in the depth of the noisome prison-house, were they heard to utter the joyful sounds of thanksgiving and praise.

On the accession of William the III. to the throne of Great Britain, the Friends, as well as other denominations of Christians dissenting from the Church of England, were, by the act of toleration, set at liberty to worship God according to the dictates of their own consciences. A solemn affirmation was also allowed to be taken by them in the courts of justice, instead of an oath, in all merely civil matters, by which provision they were relieved from many of their difficulties.

Now that the days of persecution are passed away (we trust, for ever), there is a danger that Christians should give way to a state of spiritual indolence. This danger

probably is the more to be apprehended among the Society of Friends, in consequence of their being excluded by their principles from some of the professions, and of their being so generally engaged in trade. But although a worldly spirit may too much have taken the place of that remarkable ardour, which distinguished some of the earliest Quakers, we believe that many amongst that people are still truly zealous for “the law of the testimony.”

By a late act of Parliament, the affirmation of Friends is allowed to be taken in evidence, instead of an oath, even in criminal cases. But their refusal to swear still excludes them from serving on juries, and from filling any office of honour or profit under government. These remaining disabilities are said to be by no means disagreeable to the Quakers; for they have little ambition for public office, and their principles are much opposed to an interference in the politics of the world. It ought however to be observed, that there are some measures of a public nature, of which Friends have long been the ardent and indefatigable promoters; we mean the abolition of the slave trade and slavery, and the mitigation of the anti-christian severity of our penal code. These form a branch of the politics of our country, in which it is the positive duty of Christians to take an active part, that they may thereby promote the speedy triumph of the cause of righteousness, over oppression, inhumanity, and bloodshed.

George Fox and his brethren took early care to establish in the society which they had been instrumental in forming, a salutary order of *Christian discipline*; and this



order has continued in force, that little alteration, to the present day. They set up monthly, quarterly, and yearly meetings for church-government. The *monthly meeting* is usually composed of two or more separate meetings for worship, and conducts the discipline of the church over all the individual members. The *quarterly meeting* consists of two or more monthly meetings, as geographical convenience may dictate, and receives regular reports of the religious condition of these several lesser bodies, in the form of written answers to certain fixed queries. Answers to the most important of the same queries, are annually transmitted by the quarterly meetings themselves, to the *yearly meeting*, which is composed of their representatives, but which is open to every male member of the society. From the yearly meeting emanate all laws for the general regulation of the body. The female part of the society have also their monthly, quarterly, and yearly meetings, held contemporaneously with those of the men. The great principles maintained in meetings for discipline among Friends are these—that no individual member possesses authority over others, except as far as arises from weight of character, and that the whole church unites in conducting its own affairs, under the supreme authority and gracious guidance of its only head—our Lord Jesus Christ. On this principle, these meetings have no outward president; neither is any question ever determined by majorities; but Friends when thus met together, consider it their duty to discuss every subject which comes before them, in the spirit of calmness and condescension—not without silent waiting on the Lord—until the sense of the

meeting is clearly formed. That sense is then declared and recorded by the clerk, and thus the business in hand is concluded.

Although the early Quakers were for the most part of the middle or lower ranks of society, they numbered among their members some individuals of considerable distinction. Robert Barclay of Ury in Scotland was a man of old family, large landed property, and great learning. His celebrated "Apology" for the Quakers is usually considered to contain the best account of their principles. The biography of William Penn belongs to the history of his country. He was a person of large and cultivated understanding and liberal principles. In the year 1682 King Charles II. made him an extensive grant of land in North America, where he formed the settlement of Pennsylvania. His transactions with the North American Indians were marked by the most scrupulous integrity, and his kindness to them, insured the lasting attachment of their once warlike tribes towards himself and "his children," *i. e.* the Quakers. He founded the city of Philadelphia, and the laws by which he governed the province of which it was the capital, were eminently distinguished by their mildness and wisdom, or in other words, by *their conformity to the principles of Christianity*. A large number of the Friends followed William Penn into this new settlement; and many others, taking refuge from persecution in England, found a home in other provinces of North America. The greater part of the whole Society is now resident on that continent.

We shall conclude this account with some remarks on the *creed* of this Society. In consequence of their ob-

jecting to the use of theological terms not employed in Scripture—such as *Trinity* and *Person*—and of their insisting so prominently on the inward and spiritual work of religion, Friends have often been charged with unsound views respecting the nature and character of Christ, and especially on the subject of his incarnation, meritorious life, and atoning death. Such charges were ever indignantly repelled by their early preachers and writers. In proof of the adherence of the Society, during the earlier periods of its history, to the fundamental doctrines of the New Testament, the reader may be referred to a document published by the Society A. D. 1693, and given *verbatim*, under that date, in “Sewell’s History of the Quakers.” It is entitled “The Christian Doctrine and Society of the People called Quakers cleared,” &c., and is signed “on behalf of the Christian profession and people aforesaid,” by George Whitehead, Ambrose Rigg, and several others. In this very interesting paper will be found a clear statement of the belief of the Society, in the divinity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—in the incarnation of the Son, and the atonement made by Him on the cross for the sins of all men—in his resurrection, ascension, intercession, and supreme government—in the immortality of the soul and resurrection of the body—in the future glorious appearing of Jesus Christ—and in the final and universal judgment of quick and dead.

Such was the faith of the early Quakers; and such is the faith of the Society in the present day. That it continues to be orthodox and scriptural, is clearly evinced by the following declaration issued by the Yearly Meet-

ing of London in the Spring of 1829, and signed on its behalf by its clerk, Josiah Forster.

“ In order to prevent any misapprehension as to our views, we feel ourselves called upon, at this time, to avow our belief in the inspiration and divine authority of the Old and New Testament.\*

“ We further believe, that the promise made after the transgression of our first parents, in the consequence of whose fall all the posterity of Adam are involved, that the seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent; *Gen.* iii. 15. and the declaration unto Abraham, ‘ In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed,’ *Gen.* xxviii. 14. had a direct reference to the coming in the flesh of the Lord Jesus Christ. To Him, also, did the prophet Isaiah bear testimony, when he declared, ‘ Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given : and the government shall be upon his shoulders : and he shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace : of the increase of *his* government and peace *there shall be* no end.’ *Isaiah* ix. 6, 7. And again, the same Prophet spoke of him when he said, ‘ Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows : yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted ; but he *was* wounded for our transgressions, *he was* bruised for our iniquities : the chastisement of our peace *was* upon him ; and with his stripes we are healed.’ *Isaiah* liii. 4, 5. The same blessed Redeemer is emphatically denominated by

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\* The Friends object to call the Scriptures the Word of God, applying that title to Christ alone.—(See John i. 1.)

the Prophet Jeremiah, 'THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.' *Jerm.* xxiii. 6.

"At that period, and in that miraculous manner, which God in his perfect wisdom saw fit, the promised Messiah appeared personally upon the earth, when 'He took not on *him* the nature of angels; but he took on *him* the seed of Abraham.' *Heb.* ii. 6. He 'was in all points tempted like as *we are*, yet without sin." *Heb.* iv. 15. Having finished the work which was given him to do, he gave himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God. *Eph.* v. 2. He tasted death for every man. *Heb.* ii. 9. 'He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for our's only, but also for *the sins* of the whole world.' 1 *John* ii. 2. 'We have redemption through his blood, *even* the forgiveness of sins.' *Col.* i. 14. He passed into the heavens; *Heb.* iv. 14. and being the brightness of the glory of God, 'and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;' *Heb.* i. 3. and ever liveth to make intercession for us. *Heb.* vii. 25.

"It is by the Lord Jesus Christ that the world will be judged in righteousness. *Acts*, xvii. 31. He is the mediator of the new covenant; *Heb.* xii. 24. 'the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: for by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether *they be* thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist.' *Col.* i. 15. 17. 'In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily:' *Col.*

ii. 9. and to him did the Evangelist bear testimony when he said ‘ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him, was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men.’ He ‘ was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.’ *John*, i. 1. 4. 9.

“ Our blessed Lord himself spoke of His perpetual dominion and power in his church, when He said ‘ My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life:’ *John*, x. 27, 28. and when describing the spiritual food which he bestoweth on the true believers, He declared, “ I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.’ *John*, vi. 35. He spoke also of his saving grace, bestowed on those who come in faith unto Him, when He said ‘ Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life.’ *John*, iv. 14.

“ Our religious Society, from its earliest establishment to the present day, has received these most important doctrines of Holy Scripture in their plain and obvious acceptation; and we do not acknowledge as in fellowship with us, as a Christian Community, any body of religious professors which does not thus accept them, or which openly receives and accredits as Ministers, those who attempt to invalidate any of these doctrines which we esteem essential parts of the Christian Religion.

“ It is the earnest desire of this Meeting, that all who profess our name, may so live, and so walk before God, as that they may know those sacred truths to be blessed to them individually. We desire that, as the mere profession of sound Christian doctrine will not avail to the salvation of the soul, all may attain to a living efficacious faith, which, through the power of the Holy Ghost, bringeth forth fruit unto holiness; the end whereof is everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Rom. vi. 22.* ‘ Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, *be* unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.’ ” *Rev. v. 13.*

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## METHODISTS.

THE METHODISTS in this country form a large part of the community. In the year 1729, they sprung up at Oxford, under Mr. Morgan (who soon after died) and Mr. John Wesley. In the month of November of that year, the latter being then fellow of Lincoln College, began to spend some evenings in reading the Greek New Testament along with Charles Wesley, student, Mr. Morgan, commoner, of Christ Church, and Mr. Kirkham, of Merton College. Next year, two or three of the pupils of Mr. John Wesley, and one pupil of Mr. Charles Wesley, obtained leave to attend these meetings. Two years after, they were joined by Mr. Ingham, of Queen’s College, Mr. Broughton, of Exeter, and Mr. James Her-

vey; and in 1735, they were joined by the celebrated Mr. Whitfield, then in his eighteenth year. They soon obtained the name of *Methodists*, from the exact regularity of their lives; which gave occasion to a young gentleman, of Christ Church, to say,—“ Here is a new set of *Methodists* sprung up !” Alluding to a sect of ancient Physicians, who practised medicine by *method* or regular rules, in opposition to quackery or empiricism. Thus was the term *Methodist* originally applied to this body of Christians, on account of the *methodical* strictness of their lives; but is indeed now, by some, indiscriminately appropriated to every individual who manifests a more than ordinary concern for the salvation of mankind.

These heads differing soon afterwards in religious sentiment, their respective followers distributed themselves into two parties; the one under Mr. George Whitfield, the other under Mr. John and Charles Wesley. Educated at Oxford, these leaders still continued to profess an attachment to the articles and liturgy of the Established church, though they more commonly adopted the mode of worship which prevails among the Dissenters. Upon their being excluded from the pulpits in many churches, they took to preaching in the fields; and from the novelty of the thing, in conjunction with the fervour of their exertions, they were attended by some *thousands* of people! In their public labours, Mr. Whitfield having a most sonorous voice, was remarkable for an engaging and powerful eloquence; whilst Mr. John Wesley, being less under the influence of his passions, possessed both in writing and preaching, a perspicuous and com-



manding simplicity. Even their enemies confess that they contributed in several places to reform the lower classes of the community. The *Colliers* at Kingswood, near Bristol, and the *Tinners* in Cornwall, were greatly benefited by their exertions. In consequence of their attention to the religion of Jesus, by the instrumentality of these preachers, many of them rose to a degree of respectability, and became valuable members of society. The followers of Mr. Wesley (who died in London, 1791, aged eighty-eight, and was buried in the ground behind his chapel, the Foundery, in Moorfields) are *Arminians*, though some of his preachers incline to *Baxterianism*. The followers of Mr. Whitfield (who died in 1770, aged fifty-six, at Newbury Port, near Boston, in New England, and was buried there) are *Calvinists*, and were warmly patronized by the late Countess Dowager of Huntingdon, to whom Mr. W. was chaplain, and who was a lady of great benevolence and piety. Lady Erskine (a near relation of the celebrated Counsellor of that name) has taken her situation, and is said to be equally attentive to the concerns of this part of the religious community. With respect to the splitting of the Methodists into Calvinists and Arminians, it happened so far back as the year 1741; the former being for particular, and the latter for universal redemption.

Both Mr. Wesley and Mr. Whitfield were indefatigable in promoting their own views of the Christian religion, notwithstanding all the reproaches with which they were stigmatized. It is well known, that for this purpose they went over several times to America. Mr. Whitfield, indeed, established an Orphan House in

Georgia, for which he made large collections in this country, and which was since converted into a college for the education of young men, designed chiefly for the ministry.\*

In America, the Methodists were extremely useful, riding 20 or 30 miles in the course of the day, and preaching twice or thrice to considerable congregations. The account of their labours by Mr. Hampson, in his memoirs of Mr. Wesley, is interesting and impressive. " Their excursions (says he) through immense forests, abounding in trees of all sorts and sizes, were often highly romantic. Innumerable rivers and falls of water; vistas opening to the view, in contrast with the uncultivated wild; deer now shooting across the road, and now scouring through the woods, while the eye was frequently relieved by the appearance of orchards and plantations, and the houses of gentlemen and farmers peeping through the trees, formed a scenery so various and picturesque, as to produce *a variety of reflections*, and present, we will not say to a philosophic eye, but to the mind of *every reasonable creature*, the most sublime and agreeable images. Their worship partook of the general simplicity. It was frequently conducted in the open air. The woods resounded to the voice of the preacher, or to the singing of his numerous congregation, whilst the horses fastened to the trees, formed a singular addition to the solemnity. It was, indeed, a striking picture, and might naturally

\* To this paragraph, the American editor of the Sketch has added—  
 " It has been lately burnt, and the whole of the benefice added to it, is in possession of the State. A just judgment for purchasing slaves to support a charitable institution !"

impress the mind with a retrospect of the antediluvian days, when the hills and vallies re-echoed the patriarchal devotions, and a Seth or an Enoch, in the shadow of a projecting rock, or beneath the foliage of some venerable oak, delivered his primeval lectures, and was *a preacher of righteousness to the people !*"

The distinguishing principles of Methodism, are *salvation by faith in Jesus Christ ; perceptible, and in some cases instantaneous conversion ;* and an *assurance* of reconciliation to God, with which they say, the *new birth*, or *being born again*, is inseparably attended. On these doctrines they lay the utmost stress ; and information respecting these topics, will be found in Dr. Haweis's *History of the Church of Christ*, recently published. Several persons have written the Life of Mr. Wesley ; there is one by Mr. Hampson, another by Dr. Whitehead, and a third by Dr. Coke and Mr. Moor. Mr. Whitfield's life was drawn up by the late Dr. Gillies, of Glasgow. Mr. Wesley and Mr. Whitfield both published an account of their travels and itinerant labours in this kingdom and in America. These Sketches are entitled *Journals*, and serve greatly to illustrate the principles and progress of Methodism. To conclude this article of the *Methodists*, in the words of Mr. Hampson, in his *Memoirs* of Mr. Wesley—" If they possess not much knowledge, which however we do not not know to be the case, it is at least certain they are not deficient in zeal, and without any passionate desire to imitate their example, we may at least commend their endeavours for the general good. Every good man will contemplate with pleasure, the operation of the spirit of reformation,

whether foreign or domestic, and will rejoice in every attempt to propagate Christianity in the barbarous parts of the world ; an attempt, which if in any tolerable degree successful, will do infinitely more for their civilization and happiness, than all the united energies of the philosophical infidels ; those boasted benefactors of mankind.”

Dr. Priestley published a curious volume of Mr. Wesley's Letters, just after his decease, prefaced with a sensible Address to the Methodists ; where, after having freely expostulated with them respecting their peculiarities, he gives them great credit for their zeal and unwearied activity. The *Methodists* have recently found an eloquent advocate in William Wilberforce, Esq. M. P. who pleads their cause at some length, in his Treatise on *Vital Christianity*.

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## NEW METHODISTS.

\* THE NEW METHODIST CONNECTION, among the followers of Mr Wesley, separated from the original Methodists in 1797. The grounds of this separation, they declare to be *church government*, and not doctrines, as affirmed by some of their opponents. They object to the old Methodists, for having formed a hierarchy or priestly corporation ; and say that in so doing they have robbed the people of those privileges, that as mem-

\* This article was sent the editor by a correspondent at Nottingham, and is inserted with a few alterations and omissions.

bers of a Christian church they are entitled to by reason and scripture. The *New Methodists* have therefore attempted to establish every part of their church government on popular principles, and profess to have united as much as possible the ministers and the people in every department of it. This is quite contrary to the original government of the Methodists, which in the most important cases, is confined only to the ministers. This, indeed, appears most plainly, when their conference or yearly meeting is considered; for in this meeting, no person, who is not a *travelling preacher*, has ever been suffered to enter as a member of it. And, indeed, this is the point to which the preachers have always stedfastly adhered with the utmost firmness and resolution, and on which the division at present entirely rests. They are also upbraided by the New Methodists, for having abused the power they have assumed; a great many of *these* abuses, the New Methodists have formally protested against, which are enumerated in various publications, and particularly in the *Preface to the Life* of one of their deceased friends, Mr. *Alexander Kilham*.

Though these are the points on which the division seems principally to have rested, yet there are several other things that have contributed to it. It is frequently easy to foresee and to calculate the future changes in society, that the lapse of time will produce; and in no instance is this observation better warranted than in this division, which most persons have long expected. The old attachment of the Methodists to the Established Church, which originated in Mr. Wesley, and was cherished by him and many of the preachers by all possible

means, and also the dislike to these sentiments in many others of the preachers and of the societies, were never failing subjects of contention. As all parties are distinguished in their contests by some badge or discriminating circumstance, so here *the receiving or not receiving the Lord's Supper, in the Established Church*, was long considered as the criterion of methodistical zeal or disaffection. Thus the rupture that had been long foreseen by intelligent persons, and for which the minds of the Methodists had been undesignedly prepared, became inevitable when Mr. Wesley's influence no longer interfered. Soon after Mr. Wesley's death, many things had a tendency to displease the societies, and bring forward the division. Many petitions having been sent by the societies to the preachers, requesting to have the Lord's Supper administered to them in their own chapels, the people had the mortification to find that this question was decided by *lot*, and not by the use of reason and serious discussion !

The *new Methodists* profess to proceed upon liberal, open, and ingenuous principles, in the construction of their plan of church government, and their ultimate decision in all disputed matters, is in their popular annual assembly, chosen by certain rules from among the preachers and societies. These professions are at least general and liberal ; but as this sect has yet continued for only a short season, little can be said of it at present. It becomes matter of curious conjecture and speculation, how far the leading persons among them, will act agreeably to their present liberal professions. If they should become firmly established in power and influence, and have

the opportunity of acting otherwise ; they have at least the advantage of the example of their late brethren, and of Dr. Priestley's remarks upon them. Speaking of the leading men among the Methodists, the Doctor says—“ Finding themselves by degrees at the head of a large body of people, and in considerable power and influence, they must not have been *men*, if they had not felt the love of power gratified in such a situation ; and they must have been *more than men*, if their subsequent conduct had not been influenced by it.” A shrewd hint, that Dr. P. thought the Methodists had been too remiss in their attention to their liberties, *which they ought to convey down entire and unmutulated to posterity.*

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## JUMPERS.

JUMPERS.—Originally this singular practice of *jumping* during the time allotted for religious worship and instruction, was confined to the people called Methodists in Wales, the followers of Harris, Rowland, Williams, and others. The practice began in the western part of the country about the year 1760. It was soon after defended by Mr. William Williams (the Welch poet, as he is sometimes styled) in a pamphlet, which was patronized by the abettors of jumping in religious assemblies, and viewed by the seniors and the grave with disapprobation. However, in the course of a few years, the advocates of groaning and loud talking, as well as loud singing, re-

peating the same line or stanza over and over thirty or forty times, became more numerous, and were found among some of the other denominations in the principality, and continue to this day. Several of the more zealous itinerant preachers in Wales recommended the people to cry out *Gogoniant* (the Welch word for *glory*) *Amen*, &c. &c. to put themselves in violent agitations; and finally, to *jump* until they were quite exhausted, so as often to be obliged to fall down on the floor or the field where this kind of worship was held. If any thing in the profession of religion, that is absurd and unreasonable, were to surprise us, it would be the censure that was cast upon those who gently attempted to stem this tide, which threatened the destruction of true religion as a *reasonable service*. Where the essence of true religion is placed in customs and usages which have no tendency to sanctify the several powers through the medium of the understanding, we ought not to be surprised, when we contemplate instances of extravagance and *apostacy*. Human nature, in general, is not capable of such exertions for any length of time, and when the spirits become exhausted, and the heat kindled by sympathy is subsided, the unhappy persons sink into themselves, and seek for support in intoxication. It is not to be doubted but there are many sincere and pious persons to be found among this body of people—men who think they are doing God's service, whilst they are the victims of fanaticism. These are objects of compassion, and doubtless will find it in God. But it is certain, from incontestible facts, that a number of persons have attached themselves to those religious societies, who place a very dispropor-



tioned stress on the practice of *jumping*, from suspicious motives. The theory and practice of such a religion are easily understood ; for the man who possesses an unblushing confidence, and the greatest degree of muscular energy, is likely to excel in bodily exercise. Upon the whole, it is probable, as such an exercise has no countenance in reason nor revelation, that it has been, and is still productive of more evil than good. Many of the ministers, who have been foremost in encouraging *jumping*, seemed to have nothing in view but the gratification of their vanity, inflaming the passions of the multitude by extravagant representations of the character of the Deity—the condition of man—and design of the Saviour's mission. The minister that wishes *not to study* to shew himself of God, has only to favour *jumping* with its appendages ; for as reason is out of the question, in such a religion, *he* can be under no fear of shocking it. It is some consolation to real religion, to add, that this practice is on the decline, as the more sober or conscientious, who were at first at a loss to judge where this practice might carry them, have been its pernicious tendency.

Such is the account of the JUMPERS, which, with a few alterations, has been transmitted me by a respectable minister, who frequently visits the principality. It is to be hoped, that the exercise of common sense will in time recover them from these extravagant ecstasies, which pain the rational friends of revelation, and afford matter of exultation to the advocates of infidelity.

About the year 1785, I myself happened very accidentally to be present at a meeting, which terminated in *jumping*. It was held in the open air, on a Sunday

evening, near Newport, in Monmouthshire. The preacher was one of Lady Huntingdon's students, who concluded his sermon with the recommendation of *jumping*; and to allow him the praise of consistency, he got down from the chair on which he stood, and jumped along with them. The arguments he adduced for this purpose were, that David danced before the ark—that the babe leaped in the womb of Elizabeth—and that the man whose lameness was removed, *leaped* and praised God for the mercy which he had received. He expatiated on these topics with uncommon fervency, and then drew the inference, that *they* ought to shew *similar expressions* of joy, for the blessings which Jesus Christ had put into their possession. He then gave an impassioned sketch of the sufferings of the Saviour, and hereby roused the passions of a few around him into a state of violent agitation. About nine men and seven women, for some little time, rocked to and fro, groaned aloud, and then *jumped* with a kind of frantic fury. Some of the audience flew in all directions; others gazed on in silent amazement! They all gradually dispersed, except the *jumpers*, who continued their exertions from eight in the evening to near eleven at night. I saw the conclusion of it; they at last kneeled down in a circle, holding each other by the hand, while one of them prayed with great fervour, and then *all* rising up from off their knees, departed. But previous to their dispersion, they wildly pointed up towards the sky, and reminded one another that they should soon meet *there*, and be *never* again separated! I quitted the spot with astonishment. Such disorderly scenes cannot be of any service to the deluded

individuals, nor prove beneficial to society. Whatever credit we may and ought to allow this body of Christians for good intentions, it is impossible not to speak of the practice itself, without adopting terms of unqualified disapprobation. The reader is referred to *Bingley's* and *Evan's Tours through Wales*, where (as many particulars are detailed respecting the *Jumpers*) his curiosity will receive a still farther gratification. It pains the author of the present work, that he had it not in his power to give a more favourable account of them. The decline of so unbecoming a practice will, it is to be hoped, be soon followed by its utter extinction.

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## UNIVERSALISTS.

THE UNIVERSALISTS, properly so called, are those who believe, that as Christ died for all, so, before he shall have delivered up his mediatorial kingdom to the Father, *all* shall be brought to a participation of the benefits of his death, in their restoration to holiness and happiness. Their scheme includes a reconciliation of the tenets of Calvinism and Arminianism, by uniting the leading doctrines of both, as far as they are found in the scriptures : from which union they think the sentiment of universal restoration naturally flows.

Thus they reason—"The Arminian proves from scripture, that God is love ; that he is good to all ; that his tender mercy is over all his works ; that he gave his Son

for the world ; that Christ died for the world, even for the whole world ; and that God will have all men to be saved.”

“ The Calvinist proves also from scripture, that God is without variableness or shadow of turning ; that his love, like himself, alters not ; that the death of Christ will be efficacious towards all for whom it was intended ; that God will perform all his pleasure, and that his council shall stand. The union of these scriptural principles, is the final restoration of all men.

“ Taking the principles of the Calvinists and Arminians separately, we find the former teaching, or at least inferring, that God *doth* not love all ; but that he made the greater part of men to be endless monuments of his wrath. The latter declaring the love of God to all ; but admitting his *final failure* of restoring the greater part. The God of the former, is great in power and wisdom ; but deficient in goodness, and capricious in his conduct : who that views his character can sincerely love it ? The God of the latter, is exceeding good ; but deficient in power and wisdom : who can trust such a being ? If, therefore, both Calvinists and Arminians love and trust the Deity, it is not under the character which their several systems ascribe to him ; but they are constrained to hide the imperfections which their views cast upon him, and boast of a God, of whose *highest glory*, their several schemes will not admit.”

The Universalists teach the doctrine of *election* ; but not in the exclusive Calvinistic sense of it ; they suppose that God has chosen some, for the good of all ; and that his final purpose towards all, is intimated by his calling

his elect the *first* born and the *first* fruits of his creatures, which, say they, implies other branches of his family, and a future ingathering of the harvest of mankind.

They teach also that the righteous shall have part in the first resurrection, shall be blessed and happy, and be made priests and kings to God and to Christ in the millennial kingdom, and that over them the second death shall have no power; that the wicked will receive a punishment apportioned to their crimes, that punishment itself is a mediatorial work, and founded upon mercy, consequently, that it is a means of humbling, subduing, and finally reconciling the sinner to God.

They add, that the words rendered *everlasting*, *eternal*, *for ever*, and *for ever and ever*, in the scriptures, are frequently used to express the duration of things that have ended, or must end: and if it is contended, that these words are sometimes used to express *proper eternity*, they answer, that then, the *subject* with which the words are connected, must determine the sense of them; and as there is nothing in the nature of future punishment which can be rendered as a reason why it should be endless, they infer that the above words ought always to be taken in a limited sense, when connected with the infliction of misery.

The Universalists have to contend on the one hand with such as hold with the eternity of future misery, and on the other with those who teach that *destruction or extinction of being*, will be the final state of the wicked. In answer to the latter, they say, "That before we admit that God is under the necessity of striking any of

his rational creatures out of being, we ought to pause, and inquire,

“ Whether such an act is consistent with the scriptural character of Deity, as possessed of all possible wisdom, goodness, and power ?

“ Whether it would not contradict many parts of scripture ; such, for instance, as speak of the restitution of all things—the gathering together of all things in Christ—the reconciliation of all things to the Father, by the blood of the cross—the destruction of death, &c.” These texts, they think, are opposed equally to endless misery, and to final destruction.

“ Whether those who will be finally destroyed, are not in a worse state through the mediation of Christ, than they would have been without it ? This question is founded on a position of the friends of destruction ; viz. that extinction of being, without a resurrection, would have been the only punishment of sin, if Christ had not become the resurrection and the life to men. Consequently, the resurrection and future punishment spring from the system of mediation ; but, they ask, is the justification to life, which came upon all men in Christ Jesus, nothing more than a resurrection to endless death to millions ?

“ Whether the word, *destruction*, will warrant such a conclusion ? It is evident that destruction is often used in scripture to signify a cessation of present existence only, without any contradiction of the promises that relate to a future universal resurrection. They think, therefore, that they ought to admit an universal restoration of men, notwithstanding the future destruction

which is threatened to sinners;\* because, say they, the scripture teach both."

They suppose the universal doctrine to be most consonant to the perfections of the Deity—most worthy of the character of Christ, as the mediator; and that the scriptures cannot be made consistent with themselves upon any other plan. They teach that ardent love to God, peace, meekness, candour, and universal love to men, are the natural result of their views.

This doctrine is not new. Origen, a Christian father, who lived in the third century, wrote in favour of it. St. Augustine, of Hippo, mentions some divines in his day, whom he calls the merciful doctors, who held it. The German Baptists, many of them, even before the Reformation, propagated it. The people called Tunkers, in America, descended from the German Baptists, mostly hold it. The Menonites, in Holland, have long held it. In England, about the latter end of the seventeenth century, Dr. Rust, Bishop of Dromore, in Ireland, published a piece in defence of it. And Mr. Jeremiah White wrote his book in favour of the same sentiment soon afterwards. The Chevalier Ramsay, in his elaborate work of the Philosophical principles of Natural and Revealed Religion, espouses it. Archbishop Tillotson, in one of his sermons, supposes future punishment to be of limited duration, as does Dr. Burnet, master of the Charter House, in his book on the state of the dead.

But the writers of late years, who have treated upon the subject most fully, are Dr. Newton, Bishop of Bris-

\* See Vidler's *Notes on Winchester's Dialogues on the Restoration*, fourth edition, p. 176.

tol, in his *Dissertations*; Mr. Stonehouse, Rector of Islington; Dr. Chauncy, of Boston, in America; Dr. Hartley, in his profound Work on Man; Mr. Purves, of Edinburgh; Mr. Elhanan Winchester, in his *Dialogues on Universal Restoration* (a new edition of which, with explanatory notes, has been recently published) and Mr. William Vidler. See the *Universalist's Miscellany* (a monthly publication of merit) from the first to the fourth volume, where the controversy on the subject between Mr. Vidler, Mr. Fuller, and Mr. Fisher, will be found. The Rev. Mr. Browne, also a clergyman of the church of England, has written an excellent essay on the subject. Mr. N. Scarlett has likewise published a new translation of the Testament, in which the Greek term *αιων* in the singular and plural, is rendered *age* and *ages*; and in his Appendix has proposed that its derivative *αιωνιαυ* should be rendered *age-lasting*, instead of everlasting and eternal.

The writers, who have of late particularly animadverted upon the doctrine are, in America, President Edwards and his son, Dr. Edwards; and in England, Mr. Dan. Taylor, Mr. Fisher, and Mr. Andrew Fuller.\*

Mr. Broughton, at the close of his *Dissertations on Futurity* (shocked at the idea of *eternal* punishment in *every* case) proposes the following hypothesis—"That the spirit of God had made choice of an *ambiguous* term *αιωνιος*, acknowledged on both sides, sometimes to mean *eternal*, and sometimes only a temporary duration, with

\* For most of the above account of the *Universalists*, the author is indebted to a popular minister of that persuasion; and the next paragraph but one was sent by a gentleman who espouses the doctrine of destruction,



the wise view, that men might live in fear of *everlasting punishment* ; because, it is possible, it may be *everlasting* ; and at the same time God be at liberty (if I may so speak) without impeachment of his faithfulness and truth, to inflict either *finite* or infinite punishment, as his divine wisdom, power, and goodness shall direct." He, however, only suggests this scheme with an amiable and becoming modesty.

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## DESTRUCTIONISTS.

BETWEEN the system of *restoration* and the system of *endless misery*, a middle hypothesis of the *final destruction* of the wicked (after having suffered the punishment due to their crimes) has been adopted more particularly by Dr. John Taylor of Norwich ; Rev. Mr. Bourne, of Birmingham ; and Mr. John Marsom, in two small volumes, of which there has been a second edition with additions. They say, that the scripture positively asserts this doctrine of *destruction* ; that the nature of future punishment (which the scripture terms *death*) determines the meaning of the words *everlasting*, *eternal*, *for ever*, &c. as denoting endless duration ; because no law ever did or can inflict the punishment of death for a limited period ; that the punishment cannot be corrective, because no man was ever put to death, either to convince his judgment or to reform his conduct ; that if the wicked receive a punishment *apportioned* to their crimes, their

deliverance is neither to be attributed to the mercy of God, nor the mediation of Jesus Christ, but is an act absolute justice ; and finally, that the mediatorial kingdom of Jesus Christ will never be delivered up, since the scripture asserts, that of *his kingdom there shall be no end*. Those who maintain these sentiments respecting the destruction of the wicked, are accused of espousing the doctrine of *annihilation* ; but this accusation they repel, alleging, that philosophically speaking, there can be no annihilation, and that *destruction* is the express phrase used in the New Testament. Of this sentiment there have been many advocates distinguished for their erudition and piety.

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## SABBATARIANS.

THE SABBATARIANS are a body of Christians who keep the *seventh* day as the *Sabbath*, and are to be found principally, if not wholly, among the Baptists. The common reasons why Christians observe the *first* day of the week as the Sabbath are, that on this day Christ rose from the dead ; that the apostles assembled, preached, and administered the Lord's Supper, and it has been kept by the church for several ages, if not from the time when Christianity was originally promulgated. The Sabbatarians, however, think these reasons unsatisfactory, and assert that the change of the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week, was effected by Constantine, upon

his conversion to the Christian religion. The threefollowing propositions contain a summary of their principles as to this article of the Sabbath, by which they stand distinguished. 1st, That God hath required the observation of the seventh, or last day of every week, to be observed by mankind universally for the weekly sabbath 2dly, That this command of God is perpetually binding on man till time shall be no more; and, 3dly, That this sacred rest of the seventh day sabbath is not (by divine authority) changed from the seventh and last to the first day of the week, or that the scripture doth no where require the observation of any other day of the week for weekly sabbath, but the seventh day only. There are two congregations of the Sabbatarians in London, one among the General Baptists' meeting in Mill-yard, Goodman's Fields, the other among the Particular Baptists' meeting in Red Cross-street, Cripplegate. There are also a few to be found in different parts of the kingdom.

Mr. Morse informs us that there are many Sabbatarians in America. "Some (says he) in Rhode Island observe the Jewish or Saturday sabbath, from a persuasion that it was one of the ten commandments, which they plead are all in their nature moral, and were never abrogated in the New Testament. Though, on the contrary, others of them believe it originated at the time of the creation, in the command given to Adam by the Creator himself." See Genesis, chap. ii. 3. "At New Jersey also there are three congregations of the Seventh Day Baptists; and at Ephrata, in Pennsylvania, there is one congregation of them, called Tunkers. There are

likewise a few Baptists who keep the seventh day as holy time, who are the remains of the Keithian or Quaker Baptists.”

This tenet has given rise to various controversies, and writers of considerable ability have appeared on both sides of the question. Mr. Cornthwaite, a respectable minister among them, about the year 1740, published several tracts in support of it, which ought to be consulted by those who wish to obtain satisfaction on the subject. The reader should also have recourse to Dr Chandler’s two discourses on the Sabbath, Mr. Amner’s Dissertation on the Weekly Festival of the Christian Church, and Dr. Kennicott’s Sermon and Dialogue on the Sabbath, and the Rev. S. Palmer’s publication on the *Nature and Obligation of the Christian Sabbath*, which is well worthy of attention. But whatever controversy may have been agitated on this subject, certain it is, that were no *particular day* set apart for the purpose of devotion (for which some in the present day contend) our knowledge of human nature authorises us to say, that virtue and religion would be either greatly debilitated or finally lost from among mankind.

The Sabbatarians hold in common with other Christians, the distinguishing doctrines of Christianity, and though much reduced in number, deserve a distinct mention in this miscellany, on account of their integrity and respectability.\*

\* Most of the above particulars respecting the Sabbatarians were communicated to the author by some worthy individuals of that persuasion.

## MORAVIANS.

THE MORAVIANS were originally exiles who, forced, by popish persecution to flee from their native land Moravia, found refuge on the estates of Nicholas Lewis, Count of Zinzendorf, a German nobleman, who died 1760. They were also called *Hernhuters*, from *Hernhuth*, the name of the village where they were first settled. The followers of Count Zinzendorf are called Moravians, because the first converts to his system were some *Moravian* families. The society themselves however assert, that they are descended from the old Moravian and Bohemian Brethren, who existed as a distinct sect sixty years prior to the Reformation. They also stile themselves *Unitas Fratrum*, or the *United Brethren*; and, in general, profess to adhere to the Augsburg confession of faith. When the first reformers were assembled at Augsburg in Germany, the Protestant Princes employed Melancthon, a divine of great learning and moderation, to draw up a confession of their faith, expressed in terms as little offensive to the Roman Catholics as a regard for truth would permit. And this creed, from the place where it was presented, is called the *Confession of Augsburg*. It is not easy to unravel the leading tenets of the Moravians. Opinions and practices have been attributed to them of an exceptionable nature, which the more sensible of them totally disavow. They direct their worship to Jesus Christ; are much attached to instrumental as well as vocal music in their religious services;

and discover a great predilection for forming themselves into classes, according to sex, age, and character. Their founder not only discovered his zeal in travelling in person over Europe, but has taken special care to send missionaries into almost every part of the known world. They revive their devotion by celebrating agapæ, or love feasts, and the casting of lots is used amongst them to know the will of the Lord. The sole right of contracting marriage lies with the elders. In Mr. La Trobe's edition of Spangenburg's exposition of Christian doctrine, their principles are detailed to a considerable length. There is a large community of them at a village near Leeds, which excites the curiosity of the traveller; and they have places of worship in various parts of the kingdom. Mr. Rimius published his candid narrative of this people, and Bishop Lavington (who wrote also against the Methodists) replied, in 1755, in his *Moravians compared and detected*. Mr. Weld, in his *Travels through the United States*, gives a curious account of a *Settlement of Moravians* at Bethlehem, honourable to their virtue and piety.

Dr. Paley, in his *Evidences of Christianity*, pays the following compliment to the religious practices of the *Moravians* and *Methodists*; he is speaking of the first Christians—"After men became *Christians*, much of their time was spent in prayer and devotion in religious meetings—in celebrating the eucharist—in conferences—in exhortations—in preaching—in an affectionate intercourse with one another, and correspondence with other societies. Perhaps their mode of life in its form and habit, was not very unlike the *Unitas Fratrum*, or of

*modern Methodists.*" Be it, however, the desire of *every* body of Christians not only thus to imitate the *primitive disciples* in their *outward conduct*, but to aspire after the peaceableness of *their* tempers, and the purity of *their* lives.

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## GLASSITES, OR SANDEMANIANS.

*Sandemanians*,\* a modern sect, that originated in Scotland about the year 1728: where it is, at this time, distinguished by the name of Glassites, after its founder, Mr. John Glas, who was a minister of the established church in that kingdom, but being charged with a design of subverting the national covenant, and sapping the foundation of all national establishments, by maintaining that *the kingdom of Christ is not of this world*, was expelled by the synod from the church of Scotland. His sentiments are fully explained in a tract published at that time, entitled, "The Testimony of the King of Martyrs," and preserved in the first volume of his works. In consequence of Mr. Glas's expulsion, his adherents formed themselves into churches, conformable in their institution and discipline, to what they apprehended to be the plan of the first churches recorded in the New Testament. Soon after the year 1755, Mr. Robert Sande-

\* The author has been favoured with this entire account of the Sandemanians by a gentleman of respectability, who belongs to that body of Christians.

man, an elder in one of these churches in Scotland, published a series of letters addressed to Mr. Hervey, occasioned by his Theron and Aspasio, in which he endeavours to shew, that *his* notion of faith is contradictory to the scripture account of it, and could only serve to lead men, professedly holding the doctrines called Calvinistic, to establish their own righteousness upon their frames, feelings, and acts of faith. In these letters Mr. Sandeman attempts to prove that faith is neither more nor less than a simple assent to the divine testimony concerning Jesus Christ, delivered for the offences of men, and raised again for their justification, as recorded in the New Testament. He also maintains that the word faith or belief, is constantly used by the apostles to signify what is denoted by it in common discourse, viz. a persuasion of the truth of any proposition, and that there is no difference between believing any common testimony and believing the apostolic testimony, except that which results from the testimony itself, and the divine authority on which it rests. This led the way to a controversy among those who are called Calvinists, concerning the nature of justifying faith, and those who adopted Mr. Sandeman's notion of it, and they who are denominated Sandemanians, formed themselves into church order, in strict fellowship with the churches of Scotland, but holding no kind of communion with other churches. Mr. Sandeman died 1772, in America.

The chief opinion and practices in which this sect differs from other Christians, are, their weekly administration of the Lord's Supper; their love feasts, of which every member is not only allowed, but required to par-



take, and which consist of their dining together at each other's houses in the interval between the morning and afternoon service. Their kiss of charity used on this occasion, at the admission of a new member, and at other times when they deem it necessary and proper; their weekly collection before the Lord's Supper, for the support of the poor and defraying other expenses; mutual exhortation; abstinence from blood and things strangled; washing each other's feet, when, as a deed of mercy, it might be an expression of love; the precept concerning which, as well as other precepts, they understand literally. Community of goods, so far as that every one is to consider all that he has in his possession and power liable to the calls of the poor and the church, and the unlawfulness of laying up treasures upon earth, by setting them apart for any distant, future, and uncertain use. They allow of public and private diversions so far as they are not connected with circumstances really sinful; but apprehending a lot to be sacred, disapprove of lotteries, playing at cards, dice, &c.

They maintain a plurality of elders, pastors, or bishops, in each church, and the necessity of the presence of two elders, in every act of discipline, and at the administration of the Lord's Supper.

In the choice of these elders, want of learning and engagement in trade are no sufficient objection, if qualified according to the instructions given to Timothy and Titus; but second marriages disqualify for the office; and they are ordained by prayer and fasting, imposition of hands, and giving the right hand of fellowship.

In their discipline they are strict and severe, and think

themselves obliged to separate from the communion and worship of all such religious societies as appear to them not to profess the simple truth for their only ground of hope, and who do not walk in obedience to it. We shall only add, that in every transaction they esteem unanimity to be absolutely necessary.

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## HUTCHINSONIANS.

HUTCHINSONIANS, the followers of John Hutchinson, born in Yorkshire, 1674, and who in the early part of life served the Duke of Somerset in the capacity of a steward. The Hebrew scriptures, he says, comprise a perfect system of natural philosophy, theology, and religion. In opposition to Dr. Woodward's *Natural History of the earth*, Mr. Hutchinson, in 1724, published the first part of his curious book, called, *Moses's Principia*. Its second part was presented to the public in 1727, which contains, as he apprehends, the principles of the scripture philosophy, which are a plenum and the air. So high an opinion did he entertain of the Hebrew language, that he thought the Almighty must have employed it to communicate every species of knowledge, and that accordingly every species of knowledge is to be found in the Old Testament. Of his mode of philosophising the following specimen is brought forward to the reader's attention. "The air (he supposes) exists in three conditions, fire, light, and spirit, the two latter are

the finer and grosser parts of the air in motion : from the earth to the sun, the air is finer and finer till it becomes pure light near the confines of the sun, and fire in the orb of the sun, or solar focus. From the earth towards the circumference of this system, in which he includes the fixed stars, the air becomes grosser and grosser till it becomes stagnant, in which condition it is at the utmost verge of this system ; from whence (in his opinion) the expression of *outer darkness, and blackness of darkness*, used in the New Testament, seems to be taken."

The followers of Mr. Hutchinson are numerous, and among others the Rev. Mr. Romaine, Lord Duncan Forbes of Culloden, and the late amiable Dr. Horne, Bishop of Norwich, who published an *Abstract* of Mr. Hutchinson's writings. They have never formed themselves into any distinct church or society.

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## DUNKERS AND SHAKERS.

THE Dunkers and Shakers are two sects peculiar to AMERICA.

### DUNKERS.

THE DUNKERS (or Tunkers) arose about 1724, and formed themselves into a kind of commonwealth, mostly in Pennsylvania. They baptize by immersion, dress like the Dominican friars, never shave head nor beard, have different apartments for the sexes, live chiefly on roots

and vegetables, except at their love-feasts, when they eat only mutton. It is said that no bed is allowed them but in case of sickness, for in their separate cells they have a bench to lie upon, and a block of wood for their pillow. Their principal tenet is the mortification of the body, and they deny the eternity of future punishment. They are commonly called the *harmless* Dunkers.

## SHAKERS.

THE SHAKERS, instituted in 1774, are the followers of Anna Leese, whom they stile the Elect Lady, and the Mother of all the Elect. They say she is the woman mentioned in the twelfth chapter of the Revelations, can speak seventy-two tongues, and converses with the dead. Their enthusiasm is vented in jumping, dancing, and violent exertions of the body, which bringing on *shaking*, they are termed Shakers. This dancing, they say, denotes their victory over sin. Their most favourite exercise is turning round for an hour or two, which, in their opinion, shews the great power of God. See a curious account of the Shakers in the *first* volume of the Duke de la Rochefoucault's *Travels through America*.

The *American* editor of this work, has added the following article.

“ Many of those who lately migrated from WALES to America, have adopted the following articles as their religious constitution : 1. The convention shall be called the *Christian Church*.

“ 2. It shall never be called by another name, or be

distinguished by the particular tenets of any man or set of men.

“ 3. Jesus Christ is the *only* head—believers in him the *only* members—and the New Testament the *only* rule of the fraternity.

“ 4. In mental matters, each member shall enjoy his own sentiments, and freely discuss every subject ; but in discipline, a strict conformity with the precepts of Christ, is required.

“ 5. Every distinct society belonging to this association, shall have the same power of admitting its members, electing its officers, and in case of mal-conduct, of impeaching them.

“ 6. Delegates from the different congregations, shall meet from time to time, at an appointed place, to consult the welfare and advancement of the interest.

“ 7. At every meeting for religious worship, collections shall be made for the poor, and the promulgation of the gospel *among the Heathens*.”

This plan, which has many traits to recommend it, originated chiefly with the *Rev. M. J. Rees*, who a few years ago emigrated from Wales, and has distinguished himself in America, by his talents and activity.

As to the other sects in the United States, they are much the same as on this side of the Atlantic. For an account of them, the reader may consult *Morse's American Geography*, and *Winterbotham's History of America*.

## MYSTICS.

THE MYSTICS are those who profess a pure and sublime devotion, with a disinterested love of God, free from all selfish considerations. Passive contemplation is the state of perfection to which they aspire. Of this description there have been many singular characters, especially Madam Guyon, a French lady, who made a great noise in the religious world. Fenelon, the amiable Archbishop of Cambray, favoured the sentiments of this female devotee, for which he was reprimanded by the Pope, and to whose animadversions he *most dutifully* assented, contrary to the convictions of his own mind. It is not uncommon for the Mystics to allegorise certain passages of scripture, at the same time not denying the literal sense, as having an allusion to the inward experience of believers. Thus, according to them, the word *Jerusalem*, which is the name of the capital of Judea, signifies allegorically the church militant; morally, a believer; and mysteriously, heaven. That fine passage also in Genesis, "Let there be light, and there was light," which is, according to the letter, corporeal light, signifies allegorically, the Messiah; morally, grace; and mysteriously, beatitude, or the light of glory. *Mysticism* is not confined to any particular profession of Christianity, but is to be understood as generally applied to those who dwell upon the *inward operations* of the mind (such as the *Quakers*, &c.) laying little or no stress on the outward ceremonies of religion.

## SWEDENBORGIANS.

\* THE SWEDENBORGIANS are the followers of Emanuel Swedenborg, a Swedish nobleman, who died in London, 1772. He professed himself to be the founder (under the Lord) of the *New Jerusalem Church*, alluding to the New Jerusalem spoken of in the Book of the Revelation of St. John. His tenets, although peculiarly distinct from every other system of Divinity in Christendom, are nevertheless drawn from the Holy Scriptures, and supported by numberless quotations from them. He asserts, that in the year 1743, the Lord manifested himself to him in a personal appearance ; and at the same time opened his spiritual eyes, so that he was enabled constantly to see and converse with spirits and angels.† From that time he

\* The two following sects are occasionally mentioned in conversation, and the author has been asked by young people more than once for an explanation of them. A short account therefore is here subjoined.

The *Fifth Monarchy Men* were a set of enthusiasts in the time of Cromwell, who expected the *sudden* appearance of Christ to establish on earth a new *monarchy*, or kingdom. In consequence of this allusion some of them aimed at the subversion of all human government. In ancient history we read of four great monarchies, the Assyrian, the Persian, the Grecian, and the Roman : and these men believing that this new spiritual kingdom of Christ was to be the *fifth*, came to bear the name by which they are distinguished.

The *Muggletonians* were the followers of Ludovick Muggleton, a journeyman tailor, who with his companion Reeves (a person of equal obscurity) set up for great *Prophets*, in the turbulent times of Cromwell. They pretended to absolve or condemn whom they pleased, and gave out that they were the two last witnesses spoken of in the Revelations, who were to appear previous to the final destruction of the world.

† Baron Swedenborg, in his treatise *concerning heaven and hell*, and of

began to print and publish various wonderful things, which, he says, were revealed to him, relating to heaven and hell, the state of men after death, the worship of God, the spiritual sense of the scriptures, the various earths in the universe, and their inhabitants, with many other extraordinary particulars, the knowledge of which was, perhaps, never pretended to by any other writer, before or since his time. He denies a Trinity of *persons* in the Godhead, but contends for a divine Trinity in the single person of Jesus Christ alone, consisting of a Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, just like the human Trinity in every individual man, of soul, body, and proceeding operation: and he asserts, that as the latter Trinity constitutes one man, so the former Trinity constitutes one Jehovah God, who is at once the Creator, Redeemer, and Regenerator. On this and other subjects, Dr. Priestley addressed letters to the members of the *New Jerusalem Church*, to which several replies were made, and particularly one by Mr. R. Hindmarsh, a printer.

Baron Swedenborg further maintains, that the sacred scripture contains three distinct senses, called *celestial*,

the wonderful things therein, as heard and seen by him, makes the following declaration. "As often as I conversed with angels face to face, it was in their habitations, which are like to our houses on earth, but far more beautiful and magnificent, having rooms, chambers, and apartments in great variety, as also spacious courts belonging to them, together with gardens, parterres of flowers, fields, &c. where the angels are formed into societies. They dwell in contiguous habitations, disposed after the manner of our cities, in streets, walks, and squares. I have had the privilege to walk through them, to examine all round about me, and to enter their houses, and this when I was fully awake, having my inward eyes opened." A similar description is given of *heaven* itself, but the reader is referred to the treatise whence the extract is taken.



*spiritual*, and *natural*, which are united by correspondencies; and that in each sense it is divine truth, accommodated respectively to the angels of the three heavens, and also to men on earth. This science of *correspondencies* (it is said) has been lost for some thousands of years, viz. ever since the time of Job, but is now revived by Emanuel Swedenborg, who uses it as a key to the spiritual or internal sense of the sacred scripture, every page of which, he says, is written by correspondencies, that is, by such things in the natural world as correspond unto and signify things in the spiritual world. He denies the doctrine of atonement, or vicarious sacrifice, together with the doctrines of predestination, unconditional election, justification by faith alone, the resurrection of the material body, &c. and in opposition thereto maintains, that man is possessed of free-will in spiritual things; that salvation is not attainable without repentance, that is, abstaining from evils because they are sins against God, and living a life of charity and faith, according to the commandments; that man, immediately on his decease, rises again in a spiritual body, which was inclosed in his material body, and that in this spiritual body he lives as a man to eternity, either in heaven or in hell, according to the quality of his past life.

It is further maintained by Baron Swedenborg and his followers, that all those passages in the sacred scripture, generally supposed to signify the destruction of the world by fire, &c. commonly called the last judgment, must be understood according to the above-mentioned science of correspondencies, which teaches, that by the end of the world, or consummation of the age, is not signified the

destruction of the world, but the destruction or end of the present Christian church, both among Roman Catholics and Protestants of every description or denomination; and that this last judgment actually took place in the spiritual world in the year 1757; from which æra is dated the second advent of the Lord, and the commencement of a new Christian church, which, they say, is meant by the new heaven and new earth in the Revelation, and the New Jerusalem thence descending.

Such are the general outlines of Baron Swedenborg's principal doctrines, collected from his voluminous writings. His followers are numerous in England, Germany, Sweden, &c. and also in America. They use a liturgy, and instrumental, as well as vocal music, in their public worship.\* Mr. *Proud*, formerly a General Baptist minister, is at present the most popular preacher amongst them.

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We shall close our list of DENOMINATIONS with an account of that discriminating article of belief, which refers to the *final triumphs of Christianity*. Its advocates are not indeed a sect distinct from others, but their tenet prevails in a less or greater degree through almost every department of the religious world.

\* The whole of the above account was sent to the author for insertion by a gentleman of that denomination.

## MILLENARIANS.

THE MILLENARIANS are those who believe that Christ will reign personally on earth for a thousand years, and their name, taken from the Latin, *mille*, a thousand, has a direct allusion to the duration of this spiritual empire. "The doctrine of the Millenium, or a future paradisiacal state of the earth, (says a monthly reviewer) is not of Christian but of Jewish origin. The tradition is attributed to Elijah, which fixes the duration of the world in its present imperfect condition to six thousand years, and announces the approach of a sabbath of a thousand years of universal peace and plenty, to be ushered in by the glorious advent of the Messiah. This idea may be traced in the epistle of Barnabas, and in the opinions of Papias, who knew of no written testimony in its behalf. It was adopted by the author of the Revelations, by Justin Martyr, by Irænus, and by a long succession of the fathers. As the theory is animated and consolatory, and, when divested of cabalistic numbers and allegorical decorations, *probable even in the eye of philosophy*, it will no doubt always retain a number of adherents."\*

But as the MILLENIUM has of late attracted the at-

\* It is somewhat remarkable, that DRUIDISM, the religion of the first inhabitants of this island, had a particular reference to the progressive melioration of the human species. A notion of a *Millenium* seems to have been familiar to their minds, and therefore forms a striking coincidence with Christianity. The tenets of *Druidism* (which also include the doctrine of universal restoration) are far from being extinct in the principality. See a curious and interesting sketch of the system of *Druidism*, in some very ingenious POEMS, by Edward Williams, the Welsh bard, in two volumes.

tention of the public, we shall enter into a short detail of it.

Mr. Joseph Mede, Dr. Gill, Bishop Newton, and Mr. Winchester, contend for the *personal reign* of Christ on earth. To use that prelate's own words, in his *Dissertations on the Prophecies*—"When these great events shall come to pass, of which we collect from the prophecies, this to be the proper order; the Protestant witnesses shall be greatly exalted, and the 1260 years of their prophecy in sackcloth, and of the tyranny of the beast, shall end together; the conversion and restoration of the Jews succeed; then follows the ruin of the Othman empire; and then the total destruction of Rome and of Antichrist. When these great events, I say, shall come to pass, then shall the kingdom of Christ commence, or the reign of the saints upon earth. So Daniel expressly informs us, that the kingdom of Christ and the saints will be raised upon the ruins of the kingdom of Antichrist, vii. 26, 27. *But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion to consume and to destroy it unto the end: and the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominion shall serve and obey him.* So likewise St. John saith, that upon the final destruction of the beast and the false prophet, Rev. xx. *Satan is bound for a thousand years; and I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them; and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus Christ and for the word of God; which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image; neither*

had received his mark upon their foreheads or in their hands, and they lived and reigned with Christ a THOUSAND years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. It is, I conceive, to these great events the fall of Antichrist, the re-establishment of the Jews, and the beginning of the glorious MILLENIUM, that the three different dates in Daniel of 1260 years, 1290 years, and 1335 years, are to be referred. And as Daniel saith, xii. 12. *Blessed is he that waiteth and cometh the 1335 years.* So St. John saith, xx. 6. *Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection.* Blessed and happy indeed will be this period; and it is very observable, that the martyrs and confessors of Jesus, in Papist as well as Pagan times, will be raised to partake of this felicity. Then shall all those gracious promises in the Old Testament be fulfilled—of the amplitude and extent—of the peace and prosperity—of the glory and happiness of the church in the latter days. Then, in the full sense of the words, Rev. xi. 15. *Shall the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever.* According to tradition,\* these thousand years of the reign of Christ and the saints, will be the *seventh Millenary* of the world; for as God created the world in *six* days, and rested on the *seventh*, so the world, it is argued, will continue *six* thousand years, and the *seventh thousand* will be the great *Sabbatism* or holy rest to the people of God. *One day*, 2 Pet. iii. 8. *being with the Lord, as a thousand years, and a thousand*

\* See Burnet's Theory.

*years as one day.* According to tradition, too, these thousand years of the reign of Christ and the saints, are the *great day of judgment*, in the morning or beginning whereof, shall be the coming of Christ in flaming fire, and the particular judgment of Antichrist, and the first resurrection; and in the *evening or conclusion* whereof, shall be the GENERAL RESURRECTION of the dead, *small and great*; and *they shall be judged every man according to their works.*"\*

This is a just representation of the *Millenium*, according to the common opinion entertained of it, that CHRIST will reign *personally* on earth during the period of *one thousand years!* But Dr. Whitby, in a *Dissertation on the subject*; Dr. Priestley, in his *Institutes of Religion*; and the author of the *Illustrations of Prophecy*, contend against the literal interpretation of the *Millenium*, both as to its nature and its duration. On such a topic, however, we cannot suggest our opinions with too great a degree of modesty.

Dr. Priestley (entertaining an exalted idea of the advantages to which our nature may be destined) treats the limitation of the duration of the world to *seven thousand years*, as a Rabbinical fable; and intimates that the *thou-*

\* Mr. Winchester, in his *Lectures on the Prophecies*, freely indulges his imagination on this curious subject. He suggests, that the large rivers in America are all on the eastern side, that the Jews may waft themselves the more easily down to the Atlantic, and then across that vast ocean to the Holy Land; that Christ will appear at the equinoxes (either March or September) when the days and nights are equal all over the globe; and, finally, that the body of Christ will be luminous, and being suspended in the air, over the equator, for twenty-four hours, will be seen with circumstances of peculiar glory, from pole to pole, by *all* the then inhabitants of the world!

*sand* years may be interpreted *prophetically* ; then every day would signify a *year*, and the *Millenium* last for *three hundred and sixty-five thousand* years ! Again, he supposes, that there will be no resurrection of any individuals till the general resurrection ; and that the *Millenium* implies only the *revival of religion*. This opinion is indeed to be found in his *Institutes*, published many years ago, but laterally he has inclined to the *personal reign of Christ*. See his *Farewell Sermon*, preached at Hackney, previous to his emigration to America. The same conjecture as to its duration is thrown out by the author of the *Illustrations of Prophecy* ; but he contends that in the period commonly called the *Millenium*, a melioration of the human race will gradually take place, by *natural* means, throughout the world. For his reasons, we refer to the work itself, where will be found an animated sketch of that period, when an end shall be put to many of the crimes and calamities now prevalent in the globe !

The Rev. Mr. Bicheno, of Newbury, likewise, has in his late publications, thrown out some curious particulars respecting the *Millenium* ; and though the reader may not agree with him in many things, yet he will applaud his ingenuity.

This final article of the *Millenium*, shall be closed with one observation. However the *Millenarians* may differ among themselves respecting the nature of this great event, it is agreed on all hands, that *such a revolution* will be effected in the latter days, by which *vice* and its attendant *misery* shall be banished from the earth ; thus completely forgetting all those dissensions and animosities by which the religious world has been agitated, and

terminating the grand drama of human affairs with UNIVERSAL FELICITY.\*

These are the divisions of human opinions, which characterize the more popular departments of the religious world. I have endeavoured to delineate them with accuracy and brevity. Each system boasts of admirers, and professes to have its peculiar arguments and tendencies. To a thoughtful mind they exhibit a melancholy picture of the human understanding, misguided through passion, and warped with prejudice. In drawing out the motley catalogue, several cursory reflections arose in my mind. A few only, such as may operate as a persuasive to religious moderation, and tend also to the improvement of other Christian graces, shall be submitted to the reader's attention.

\* The professors of Christianity have instituted *Societies* for the advancement of religion. There are four which deserve to be mentioned: 1. *The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge*, which erects charity schools in England and Wales, and distributes Bibles, Common Prayer Books, and religious tracts; 2. *The Incorporated Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts*, which takes care that the West India islands and the British colonies in North America are provided with episcopal clergymen and schoolmasters; 3. *A Society in Scotland for propagating Christian Knowledge*, designed to banish ignorance and profaneness from the Highlands and Western islands; and, 4. *A Society established in Ireland called the Incorporated Society in Dublin for promoting English Protestant Working Schools*.

Mr. Daniel Neal, about 60 years ago, estimated the number of Dissenters in England at one hundred and fifty thousand families; but since that period it is believed that they have declined. At present the proportion of *Nonconformists* to the *Members of the Church of Eng'and* is supposed to be as *one to five*; and it is singular that the *same* proportion holds between the *Episcopalians* and *Roman Catholics* in Ireland.



## REFLECTIONS.

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I pray God to give all his *ministers* and *people* more and more of the *Spirit of Wisdom* and of *love*, and of a *sound mind*, and to remove far from us those mutual *jealousies* and *animosities* which hinder our acting with that *unanimity* which is necessary to the successful carrying on of our common warfare against the enemies of CHRISTIANITY.

DODDRIDGE'S *Rise and Progress of Religion*.

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A MODEST estimate of the human faculties is an irresistible inducement to moderation. After laborious investigations, probably with equal degrees of knowledge and of integrity, men arrive at opposite conclusions. This is a necessary consequence of present imperfection. Human reason, weak and fallible, soars with feeble, and often with ineffectual wing, into the regions of speculation. Let none affirm that this mode of argument begets an indifference to the acquisition and propagation of religious truth. To declare that all tenets are alike, is an affront to the human understanding. The chilling hesitation of scepticism, the forbidding sternness of bigotry, and the delirious fever of enthusiasm, are equally abhorrent from the genius of true Christianity. Truth being the conformity of our conceptions to the nature of things, we should be fearful lest our conceptions be tinged with error. Philosophers suppose that the senses convey the most determinate species

of information ; yet these senses, notwithstanding their singular acuteness, are not endued with an instinctive infallibility. How much greater cause have we to mistrust the exercise of our rational powers, which often from early infancy are beset with prejudices !

Reason, though imperfect, is the noblest gift of God, and upon no pretence whatever must it be decried. It distinguishes man from the beasts of the field—constitutes his resemblance to the Deity, and elevates him to the superiority he possesses over this lower creation. That it is incompetent to investigate certain subjects which our boundless curiosity may essay to penetrate, is universally acknowledged.

Upon many religious topics, which have tried and tortured our understandings, the sacred writers are respectfully silent. Where they cease to inform us we should drop our inquiries ; except we claim superior degrees of information, and proudly deem ourselves more competent to decide on these intricate subjects. The primitive Christians, in some of their councils, elevated the New Testament on a throne—thus intimating their concern, that by that volume *alone* their disputes should be finally determined.

The diversity of religious opinions implies no reflection upon the sufficiency of scripture to instruct us in matters of faith and practice, and should not, therefore, be made a pretence for uncharitableness.

Controversies are frequently agitated concerning words rather than things. This is to be ascribed chiefly to the ambiguity of language, which has been a fertile source of ecclesiastical animosities. But there is not in the world,

such a multitude of opinions as superficial observers may imagine. A common gazer at the starry firmament conceives the stars to be innumerable; but the astronomer knows their number to be limited—nay, to be much smaller than a vulgar eye would apprehend. On the subjects of religion, many men dream rather than think—imagine rather than believe. Were the intellect of every individual awake, and preserved in vigorous exercise, similarity of sentiment would be much more prevalent. But mankind will not think, and hence *thinking* has been deemed “one of the least exerted privileges of cultivated humanity.” It unfortunately happens that the idle flights indulged by enthusiasts\*—the burdensome rites revered by the superstitious—and the corrupt maxims adopted by worldly-minded professors, are charged on the scriptures of truth. Whereas the inspired volume is fraught with rational doctrines—equitable precepts—and immaculate rules of conduct. Fanciful accommodations—distorted passages—false translations—and forced analogies, have been the despicable means employed to debase and corrupt the Christian doctrine. A calm and impartial investigation of the word of God, raises in our minds

\* Since the article relative to the *Weslean* METHODISTS has been thrown off, a communication has been made to the author respecting their *revival meetings*, where certain persons, under the influence of a religious phrenzy, occasion by their groanings and vociferations an uncommon degree of tumult and confusion. The more sensible, however, of the Methodists, reprobate these disgraceful scenes. At Nottingham the writer of this paragraph witnessed them with astonishment. He hopes that such fanaticism will not continue long, and that some persons of respectability among them will interfere, so as to put an end to practices, which cannot but strengthen the hands of infidelity, and afford matter of grief to all the friends of real and substantial piety.

conceptions worthy the perfections of Deity—suitable to the circumstances of mankind, and adapted to purify and exalt out nature :

RELIGION'S lustre—is by nature innocent,  
Divinely pure, and simple from all arts ;  
You daub and dress her like a common mistress—  
The harlot of your fancies ! and by adding  
False beauties, which she wants not, make the world  
Suspect her angel face is foul beneath,  
And will not bear all lights !

The Papists deprive their laity of the use of scripture, by restraining its use, and denying its sufficiency. The same reason also was assigned to vindicate the necessity of an infallible head to dictate in religious matters. Notwithstanding these artful devices to produce unanimity of sentiment, they were not more in possession of it than the Protestants. The discordant sects, which at different periods sprang up in the bosom, and disturbed the tranquillity of the Catholic church, are demonstrative proofs that they failed to attain the desired object. Pretences, therefore, however goodly, should be rejected if they tend to invalidate the sufficiency, or disparage the excellence of holy writ. Least of all should diversity of sentiment be alleged, for it does not originate in the scriptures themselves, but in the imbecility of the understanding—in the freedom of the will—in the pride of passion—and in the inveteracy of prejudice. Deists, nevertheless, who are expert in observing what may be construed into an objection against revealed religion, declaim loudly on this plausible topic. On account of the diversity of sentiment which obtains, they charge the

Bible with being defective in a species of intelligence it never pretended to communicate. Unincumbered with human additions, and uncontaminated with foreign mixtures, it furnishes the believer with that information which illuminates the understanding—meliorates the temper—invigorates the moral feelings, and improves the heart. *All scripture given by inspiration, is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished under all good works.*

Let not any one presume to exempt himself from an attention to religion, because some of its tenets seem involved in difficulties.

Upon articles which promote the felicity, and secure the salvation of mankind, the scripture is clear and decisive. The curiosity of the inquisitive, and the restlessness of the ingenious, have involved some subjects of theological disquisition in considerable obscurity. Dr. Paley, speaking of the disputes which distract the religious world, happily remarks, “that the rent has not reached the foundation.” Incontrovertible are the facts upon which the fabric of natural and revealed religion is reared; and *the gates of hell shall not prevail against it!* He who seriously and dispassionately searches the scriptures, must confess that they teach, in explicit terms, that God rules over all—that man is fallen from his primeval rectitude—that the Messiah shed his blood for his restoration—and that in a future state rewards await the righteous, and punishments will be inflicted on the wicked.

From the preceding sketch of the different opinions of Christians, it appears that controversies have been chiefly

agitated concerning the person of *Christ*—the subject of the *divine favour*—and the article of *church government*. But what was the specific matter of disputation? Not whether *Christ* has actually appeared on earth to introduce a new dispensation; nor whether God is disposed to shew *grace* or favour towards fallen man; nor whether the professors of religion ought to submit themselves to certain regulations, or *church government*, for mutual benefit. These are truths revered by every denomination, and the only point of contention has been, what *particular views* are to be entertained of these interesting facts. The Trinitarian, the Arian, and the Socinian, equally acknowledge the *divinity* of Christ's mission, or that he was the Messiah predicted by the ancient prophets; and the chief point of dispute is, whether this Messiah be a man highly inspired—or one of the angelic order—or a being possessed of the attributes of Deity.\* The Calvinist, the Arminian, and the Baxtarian also, each of them firmly believes that *the grace of God hath appeared*, and differ only respecting the wideness of its extent, and the mode of its communication. Similar observations might be transferred to the subject of church government, and the administration of ceremonies. But sufficient has been said to shew that the differences subsisting between Christians do not affect the truth of Christianity, nor hazard the salvation of mankind.

Faint indeed is the light thrown by revelation on cer-

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\* This is very inaccurately stated. The difference is *fundamental*. *Vide* pp. 130-3.

tain subjects. Yet no lover of righteousness need distress himself, whether he be mistaken in leading a life of virtue and of piety. Practical religion lies within a narrow compass. The sayings of Christ embrace almost every part of human conduct, though his disciples have been lamentably deficient in paying them the attention due to their importance. Jesus Christ assures us, that *to love the Lord our God with all our hearts, is the first and great commandment*—and that *the second is like unto it—to love our neighbour as ourselves*. They entertain mistaken views of the *glorious gospel*, who consider it inimical to the prosperity of the human race. Descending from a God of love, and presented to us by his only begotten Son—every mind should have opened for its reception. Wrangling should have been prevented by the clearness of its fundamental doctrines, hesitation about obedience precluded by the justice of its precepts, and the beauty of its examples should have captivated the most indifferent hearts.

The perplexity in which some religious tenets are involved, instead of alienating us from the practice of righteousness, should quicken our inquiries after truth. Indeed, upon a serious and intelligent individual, it produces this beneficial effect. Having in his eye the scripture as the only standard, he is the more alive to free inquiry, when he contemplates the diversity of religious systems; and more accurately scrutinizes their nature, examines their foundation, and ascertains their tendencies. This mode of arriving at truth, is attended with sterling advantages. Our knowledge is enlarged—our candour established—and our belief founded on the firm

basis of conviction. Such a believer reflects an honour upon the denomination with which he connects himself. For feeling sensibly the difficulties of religious investigation, he presumes not to charge with *heresy* those of his fellow Christians who differ from him ; nor is he such a stranger to the perfections of the Deity, and to the benign spirit of his religion, as to consign them over to the regions of future misery. Of Mr. Gouge, an eminent Nonconformist minister, it is thus honourably recorded by the great and good Archbishop Tillotson—" He allowed others to differ from him even in opinions that were very dear to him, and provided men did but *fear God, and work righteousness*, he loved them heartily, how distant soever from him in judgment about things less necessary : in all which he is very worthy to be a pattern to men of all persuasions."

Let us reflect with pleasure in how many important articles of belief all Christians are agreed.

Respecting the origin of evil, the nature of the human soul, the existence of an intermediate state, and the duration of future punishment, together with points of a similar kind, opinions have been, and in this imperfect state will ever continue to be different. But on articles of faith, far more interesting in themselves, and far more conducive to our welfare, are not all Christians united? We *all* believe in the perfections and government of one God—in the degradation of human nature through transgression—in the vast utility of the life, death, and sufferings of Jesus Christ—in the assurance of the divine aid—in the necessity of exercising repentance, and of cultivating holiness—in a resurrection from the dead—and in a



future state of rewards and punishment. Cheerfully would I enter into a minute illustration of this important part of the subject ; but the devout and intelligent Dr. Price has ably discussed it in the first sermon on the Christian Doctrine, to which discourse I refer the reader, and recommend it to his repeated and impartial perusal. Many Christians are more anxious to know wherein their brethren *differ* from them, than wherein they are agreed. This betrays an unhappy propensity to division, and bears an unfavourable aspect on mutual forbearance, one of the highest embellishments of the Christian character. An enlightened zeal is perfectly compatible with religious moderation, which is more particularly opposed to the furious spirit of uncharitableness, the gangrene of genuine Christianity. From the shy and distant deportment of men of different persuasions towards each other, a stranger to them all, would with difficulty be brought to believe that they looked up to the *same* God—confided in the *same* Saviour—and were bending their steps towards the *same* state of future happiness. To me, often has the Christian world had the appearance of a subdued country, portioned out into innumerable districts, through the pride and ambition of its conquerors, and each district occupied in retarding each other's prosperity. Alas ! what would the *Prince of Peace* say, were he to descend and sojourn among us ? Would he not reprove our unhallowed warmth—upbraid us with our divisions—chide our unsocial tempers—and exhort to amity and concord ? “ This antipathy to your fellow Christians,” would he say, “ is not the *effect* of my religion, but proceeds from the *want* of it. My doctrines, precepts, and

example, have an opposite tendency. Had you *learned of me* you would have never uttered against your brethren terms of reproach, nor lifted up the arm of persecution. The new commandment I gave unto you was—*That ye love one another.*”

The ingenious Mr. Seed (a clergyman) observes, “Our own particular darling tenets, by which we are distinguished from the bulk of Christians, we look upon as our private enclosures, our private walks, in which we have property exclusive of others, and which we take care to cultivate, beautify, and fence in against all invaders. To the received notions, however *important*, we are more indifferent, as the common field and public walks, which lie open to every body.” Were the professors of the Gospel once fully sensible how they coincide on the fundamental facts of natural and revealed religion, they would cherish with each other a more friendly intercourse, unite more cordially to propagate religion both at home and abroad, and superior degrees of success would crown their combined exertions for the purpose. Much is it regretted that disputes have generally been agitated concerning unessential points, and with an acrimony diametrically opposite to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. That controversy is in itself injurious to truth, no intelligent individual will insinuate. When conducted with ability and candour, light has been struck out, errors have been rectified, and information, on interesting subjects, has been communicated to the public. But alas! controversy has been perverted to evil purposes. To many who have engaged in theological discussion, victory, not truth, appears to have been the object of

pursuit. Seduced by unworthy motives, they swerved from the line of conduct prescribed by an apostle, and contended *boisterously* rather than *earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints*. Fiery controversialists, hurried away by impetuosity of temper, or exasperated by the opposition of an acute and pertinacious adversary, have disgraced the polemic page by opprobrious terms and ungenerous insinuations. Thus are infidels furnished with an additional objection to revealed religion—the investigation of interesting truth terminates in mutual reproaches ; and Christians of different sentiments, driven still farther from each other, are the less fitted to associate together in the common mansions of the blest. To this pernicious mode of agitating disputes, there are, however, exceptions, and instances of this kind might be adduced. In the defence of Christianity, and in the support of its particular doctrines, writers have stood forth whose temper and liberality breathe the genuine spirit of the Christian Religion. Doddridge's *Letters to the Author of Christianity not founded in Argument*, Bishop Watson's *Reply to Gibbon*, and Campbell's *Answer to Hume on Miracles*, are admirable examples of the candour with which religious controversies should be invariably conducted. In an age enlightened like the present, this conciliating spirit was to be expected ; and we indulge the pleasing hope, that times still more auspicious to truth are approaching, when the amicable discussion of *every* doctrine supposed to be contained in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, shall obtain an universal prevalence :—

Seize upon *truth* where'er 'tis found,  
 Among your friends—among your foes,  
 On *Christian* or on *Heathen* ground,  
 The flower's *divine* where'er it grows;  
 Neglect the prickles and assume the rose!

WATTS.

TRUTH, indeed, moral and divine, flourishes only in the soil of freedom. There it shoots up and sheds its fruit for the healing of the nations. Civil and religious liberty are two of the greatest earthly blessings which heaven can bestow on man. Thrice happy are the people who experience the benefits of good government, unburdened by the impositions of oppression, and who enjoy the sweets of liberty, unembittered by the curse of anarchy and of licentiousness!

We should allow to others the same right of private judgment in religious matters, which we claim and exercise ourselves.

It is replied—"We forbid not the sober use of this privilege." But who can estimate the *sobriety* of another man's speculations? and by reprobating the opinions which a serious brother may happen to entertain in consequence of free investigation, we tacitly condemn that operation of his mind which induced him to take up such tenets. This is the spirit of Popery in disguise. Cautiously exercising his reason, and devoutly examining the sacred records, *let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind*. This was the judicious advice of Paul to the primitive Christians, and no substantial reason has been, or ever will be given for its being abandoned. For a Protestant, who demands and exercises the right of private judgment, to deny it his brother, is an unpardonable in-

consistency. It is also an act of injustice, and, therefore, contrary to reason, condemned by revelation, and prejudicial to the best interests of mankind. He who insults your person, steals your property, or injures your reputation, subjects himself to the punishment which the law denounces against such offences. What then can we think of the man who attempts to rob you of the right of private judgment?—a jewel of inestimable price—a blessing of the first magnitude! Were we once to relinquish *thinking for ourselves*, and indolently to acquiesce in the representations of others, our understandings might soon groan beneath the absurdities of other men's creeds, and our attention be distracted by the perplexed nature of our religious services. Hitherto, persons have never been wanting unreasonable enough to impose on their brethren articles of faith. The late Mr. Robinson, of Cambridge, an avowed foe to ecclesiastical tyranny, has traced its sources with his usual acuteness, and pronounces them to be power—law—patronage—office—the abuse of learning, and mistaken piety. These pretences for domination over conscience are plausible, and by their speciousness millions have been deceived. But explain to a man of common sense the nature and foundation of religious liberty, and the infatuation ceases. He must perceive that the Father of spirits hath authorised no man to dictate to another what he is to believe—much less to impose his dogmas under pain of eternal punishment;

Let Cæsar's dues be ever paid,  
 To Cæsar and his throne;  
 But *consciences* and *souls* were made,  
 To be the Lord's alone.

WATTS.

*Why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?* was the energetic language in which Christ reproached the Pharisees; and *prove all things* was Paul's manly exhortation to the church at Thessalonica. These passages alone prove, beyond the possibility of dispute, that both Christ and Paul were distinguished patrons of free inquiry. Free inquiry, even in its fullest extent, has been found serviceable to the interests of religion. Hereby error ceases to be perpetuated, and truth emerges from those shades of darkness with which she has been industriously enveloped by the artful and the designing. Survey the page of ecclesiastical history—mark the intervals of langour when the right of private judgment lay dormant—then was the church of Christ debilitated and pestered with a heterogeneous mass of errors. Excellently is it remarked in a periodical publication—"No man can write down truth. Inquiry is to truth what friction is to the diamond. It proves its hardness—adds to its lustre—and excites new admiration." The ablest advocates for Christianity confess, that by the attacks of its enemies provoking examination, it has been benefited rather than injured. To infidel writers we are indebted for Butler's profound Analogy—Law's Theory of Natural and Revealed Religion—Campbell's Dissertations on Miracles—Newton's work on the Prophecies—Watson's Apology for the Bible—and other performances, which reflect as much honour on the names of their respective authors, as they have rendered service to the glorious cause they espoused.

Let us be careful to treat those who differ from us with kindness.

Believing those who differ from us to be the disciples of error, they have a powerful claim on our compassion. And as a farther incentive to a lenient conduct, it should be remembered—that *we differ from them just as much as they do from us*. By either party, therefore, no anathemas should be hurled, and a proneness to persecution should be instantly eradicated. The Quakers, in their address to James the Second, on his accession, told him, that they understood he was no more of the established religion than themselves:—"We therefore hope (say they) that thou wilt allow us that liberty which thou takest thyself." The terms *schism* and *heresy* are in the mouth of many, and it is no unfrequent case to find that those who use them most, least understand their real import. Dr. Campbell (who lately favoured the public with an excellent translation of the Four Gospels) thus concludes a learned dissertation on the subject: "No person (says he) who in the spirit of candour and charity adheres to that, which, to the best of his judgment, is right, though in this opinion he should be mistaken, is in the scriptural sense either *schismatic* or *heretic*; and he, on the contrary, whatever sect he belongs to, is more entitled to those odious appellations who is most apt to throw the imputation upon others." Would to God, that this observation, made by a great and good man, were engraven on the memory of every individual in Christendom!\*

\* Having had the honour of attending the lectures both of Dr. Campbell and Dr. Gerard, at Aberdeen, in the year 1790, the author takes this opportunity of expressing his obligation for the instruction received on many important topics; and particularly for that *amiable spirit of candour*, which induced them fairly to state opposite opinions, and never to dis-

Upon the advantages arising from Christian moderation we might largely expatiate, and to detail the evils which have flown from an unlightened and furious zeal, would be to stain my page with blood. The incomparable Bishop Hall, in the last century, wrote a treatise on moderation, and has discussed the subject with that eloquence and ability which are peculiar to all his writings. But this great and good man, towards the close of the same treatise, forgetting the principles which he had been forcibly inculcating, devotes one solitary page to the execrable cause of intolerance. This page he concludes with these remarkable expressions—" *Master Calvin did well approve himself to God's church, in bringing Servetus to the stake at Geneva.*" Blessed Jesus ! how art thou wounded in the house of thy friends ! After this deplorable instance of human inconsistency, should not the most eminent of thy followers beware, lest, by indulging even in the slightest degree a spirit of intolerance, they be insensibly led either to adopt or applaud practices which, under the specious mask of an holy zeal, outrage the very first principles of humanity ? To love our *own party* only, is (to use the words of the excellent Doddridge) nothing else than *self-love* reflected. The most zealous partizans, therefore, are revelling in *self-gratification*.

Christians, indeed, of almost *every* denomination, appear at times to have forgotten, that harshness widens rather than closes the breaches which previous diversity of sentiment may have occasioned. Coercive measures reach over the least trait of that uncharitableness, which is the disgrace of Christianity. The Spanish proverb says, " *To parents—to teachers—and to God, all sufficient, we cannot exercise too great a degree of gratitude.*"



not the mind, and the issuing edicts to extort assent to speculative tenets, is the bombast of civil authority. Truth rests on evidence. But what has *evidence* to do with exertions of power, implements of torture, and scenes of devastation? From the commencement of the fourth century, down to the illustrious æra of the Reformation, wide and unmolested was the empire of ignorance and of superstition over the human mind. At Rome, for a series of ages, the chair of infallibility was filled by a succession of intolerent and domineering Pontiffs. Complicated systems of cruelty were industriously devised and inhumanly practised, for the support and defence of their most holy faith. Out of that once respectable capital of the world, the demon of persecution rushed forth, brandished his torch, and deluged the church of Christ with the blood of her martyrs. Impatient for the destruction of the human race, he flew into different regions of the earth, framed racks, fixed stakes, erected gibbets, and, like a pestilence, scattered around him consternation and death ! Shall the mild and evangelical genius of Protestantism countenance a temper which incites to such execrable deeds, and exultingly enrolls the names of the perpetrators in the calendar of the saints? In this twilight state of being, to expostulate is our province, to inveigh and persecute is forbidden. *The glorious Gospel of the blessed God* prohibits rash accusations, cruel surmises, and malignant anathemas. Had an inviolable regard been paid to the golden rule, *Do unto others as ye would they should do unto you*, intolerance would have never reared its ensanguined crest to affright the children of men. *Ye know not what manner of*

*spirit ye are of*—was our Saviour's pertinent reprimand to the disciples, who, in the plenitude of their zeal, would have called down fire from heaven to consume the deluded Samaritans. Too often does a portion of this accursed spirit reign in the breasts of Protestants. Hence censures are poured forth, hatreds are engendered, and a preparation for heaven is retarded. Instead, therefore, of presumptuously usurping the seat of judgment, which the Almighty has exclusively reserved to himself, and of impiously aiming to become the dispensers of the divine vengeance, let us wait the issue of all things, in deep and reverential silence. A wise and a good God will solemnly decide the business, when he *judges the world in righteousness !*

Let us not repine because perfect unanimity of religious sentiment is unattainable in this present state.

A repining spirit is the source of ill temper towards those who dissent from us ; but it seems to be the intention of the Divine Being, that we should think differently concerning certain points of faith and practice. Variety marks the works of God. It is impressed throughout the circumference of the natural, the animal, and the intellectual world. Above us, we behold the dazzling brightness of the sun, the pale splendour of the moon, the mild twinkling of the stars, and the variegated colours which adorn the firmament of heaven ! Around us, the surface of the earth is diversified into a thousand beautiful forms, and in the animal, the vegetable, and the fossil kingdoms, no two individual productions are perfectly alike ! Within us, upon the slightest examination, we discern our minds stamped with an original peculiarity.

From senseless idiotism, up to the piercing sagacity of Newton, how numerous are the gradations of intellect ! Minds are of various sizes. Their capacities, habits and views are never in strict conformity with each other. In some degree, therefore, diversity of opinion flows from the very structure of our understanding. To fall out with this branch of the dispensations of God is to arraign his wisdom. Doubtless he might have shed upon us such a superior degree of light that we should have seen as with one eye, and have been altogether of one mind. But the Supreme Being has otherwise ordered it ; and with becoming resignation let us acquiesce in the propriety of the appointment. “ If it *must* be with us (says good Bishop Hall) as with two famous rivers in the East, that they run threescore miles together in one channel, with their waters divided in very colour from each other, yet let it be (as it is with them) without noise, without violence.”

Innumerable and unavailable have been the attempts made in the successive ages of the church to produce *unanimity of sentiment*. For this purpose legislatures have decreed various acts, poured forth torrents of human blood, and perpetrated deeds at which humanity sickens, shudders, and turns away with disgust. Francis the First, King of France, used to declare, “ that if he thought the blood in his arm was tainted with the *Lutheran heresy*, he would have it cut off, and that he would not spare even his own children, if they entertained sentiments contrary to the Catholic Church.” Pride in one person, passion in a second, prejudice in a third, and in a fourth investigation, generates difference of opinion. Should diversity be deemed an evil, it is incumbent on

rational beings, and congenial with the dignity of the Christian profession, to improve it to valuable purposes. It is an indisputable fact, that different denominations have, in every age of the church, kept a jealous eye over each other; and hereby the scripture, the common standard to which they appealed for the truth of their respective tenets, have been preserved in greater purity. It may also be added, that diversity of opinion quickens the inquiries after truth, and gives scope for the exercise of charity, which in one passage of the sacred writings is pronounced *superior to faith and hope*, and in another passage termed *the bond of perfectness*. Much improvement have good men extracted from the common evils of life, by these evils giving rise to graces and virtues which otherwise, perhaps, would have had no existence; or, at least, would have been faintly called forth into action. To perceive the justice of this observation, it is not necessary that we be profound contemplators of human affairs.

Under the accumulated difficulties of faith and practice, by which we are embarrassed in this sublunary state of imperfection, we should meditate on the doctrine of a providence, which administers the richest consolation. The dominion exercised by the Supreme Being over the works of his hands, is neither partial as to its objects, narrow in its extent, or transitory in its duration. Unlike earthly monarchs, who expire in their turn, and who are successively borne into the tombs of their ancestors, *the King of Saints liveth and reigneth for ever and ever!* Evils, indeed, have entered the world, and still continue to distress it. But these evils have not crept into the

system unknown to its great Author ; and the attributes of Deity ensure their extirpation. Our rejoicing is—*the Lord God omnipotent reigneth !* Glorious, therefore, *must* be the termination of the divine dispensations. The august period is predicted in sacred writ, and lies concealed in the womb of time. Distant may be its arrival, but its blessings, once realized, will compensate the exercise of your faith, and the trial of your patience :—

“ One part, one little part, we dimly scan,  
Thro’ the dark medium of life’s fev’rish dream ;  
Yet dare arraign the whole stupendous plan,  
If but that little part incongruous seem ;  
Nor is that part perhaps what mortals deem :  
Oft from apparent ills our blessings rise—  
O ! then renounce that impious self-esteem,  
That aims to trace the secrets of the skies ;  
For thou art but of dust—*be humble and be wise.*”

BEATTIE.

Penetrated with a sense of the imperfection of this present life, let us be exceedingly cautious how we form our religious sentiments, watch unremittingly over our tempers and conduct, and aspire to that better world, where *pure and unadulterated truth* shall be disclosed to our view !

Of all the subjects presented to the human mind, religion claims the first and the greatest attention. If there be a *God*, a *Providence*, a *Saviour*, and a *Future State of retribution*, these weighty truths ought to be pressing upon our minds, and presiding over our conduct. To familiarize ourselves with their evidences, to lay open our souls to their energy, and promote, by every *honourable* method, their spread and establishment among mankind, should be our noblest ambition. Zeal is an elevated

and an useful passion. It is forcibly and repeatedly enjoined in the sacred writings. It forms the leading trait of excellence in the best and most enlightened characters. Indeed, an individual can scarcely be pronounced truly good, except he possesses a portion of this celestial fire. But let us be exceedingly careful that our warmth be temperate and regular. Zeal, confined within the limits prescribed by reason and scripture, is attended with the most blessed consequences. Loosened from these restraints, like the devouring conflagration, it involves in one undistinguishable ruin the victims of its fury, and triumphs in the desolation it has effected. How different is the Christian, influenced by a zeal purely *evangelical*, from the monster, who is either swoln with the venom of uncharitableness, or pregnant with persecution for conscience sake ! “ Mistake me not (says good Richard Baxter), I do not slight *orthodoxy*, nor jeer at the name ; but only disclose the pretences of *devilish zeal* in pious or seemingly pious men. The slanders of some of these, and the bitter, opprobrious speeches of others, have more effectually done the Devil’s service, under the name of *orthodoxy* and zeal for truth, than the malignant scornors of godliness.” The pious Matthew Henry declares, “ that *of all the Christian graces, ZEAL is most apt to turn sour.*” And Dr. Doddridge in his *Family Expositor*, has this remark—“ Wisely did Christ silence the suspicious praises of an *unclean spirit* ; and vain is all the hope, which men build merely on those *orthodox professions* of the most important truths, in which *Satan* himself could vie with them.” May these observations be remembered by zealots of every description !

Indeed, the light and darkness now blended together instead of generating a spirit of scepticism, or precipitating us into acts of violence, should impel us to look for *the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. What ye know not now, ye shall know hereafter*—was our Saviour's kind declaration to his disciples, respecting an event which occurred whilst he continued to sojourn amongst them. It is, therefore, reasonable to believe that we shall not remain ignorant of matters of superior importance, when the proper period of communicating higher degrees of information arrives. We may, however, be assured, that the Spirit of God guides all good men into *necessary* truth. This is a sentiment in which the wisest of mankind concur; and upon which learned divines, after their most penetrative researches, are obliged ultimately to rest. A venerable and distinguished Christian father pronounced the greatest *heresy* to be a *wicked life*. Devoutly is it wished that those who are clamorous about speculative tenets, would level their artillery more against the violation of the preceptive part of our religion.

*Pilgrims and sojourners on earth*, we are hastening to an eternal world, and a few more fleeting years will place even the youngest of us before the tribunal of Heaven. Whether we can abide the awful scrutiny which shall be instituted at the last great day, "for which all other days were made," is a question of infinite importance, and most intimately concerns rational and accountable creatures. Amidst the din of controversy, and the jarrings of adverse parties, the opinions of the head are often substituted for the virtues of the heart

and thus is practical religion most deplorably neglected. Fleeing, therefore, those pernicious disputes, which damp our devotion, and contract our benevolence, let us assiduously cultivate the means by which our faith may be invigorated, our hope enlivened, our charity confirmed, and our affections elevated to *the things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God!* The veil now thrown over this preliminary state, and concealing from our view celestial objects, shall be speedily removed. Then bidding an adieu to prejudices which darken the understanding, irritate the temper, and deform the spirit, we shall embrace each other with perfect love, and shall be astonished at ourselves for having been on earth so addicted to unprofitable disputations, and so backward to the exercise of brotherly kindness, and of Christian charity.

Almighty God! look down on thine *erring* creatures. Pity their darkness and imperfection. Direct them into *the truth as it is in Jesus*. Banish from their hearts the bitterness of censure. Cherish in their minds a spirit of moderation and love towards their fellow Christians. To their zeal add knowledge, and to their knowledge charity. Make them patient and humble under the difficulties which adhere to their faith, and under the perplexities which accompany their practice. *Guide them by thy counsel*, and, through the mediation of thy Son Jesus Christ, *receive them into thy kingdom and glory.*—AMEN.

FINIS.



## APPENDIX.

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### ROW HERESY.

SOME time in the year 1819, Thomas Erskine, Esq. advocate, published a small treatise on the Evidences of Christianity, eloquently and orthodoxly written, which being immeasurably lauded, was followed by several other productions. Whether this praise, or a trip which Mr. Erskine, to do to Rome, had rendered him ambitious of becoming the founder of a new sect, we know not; but the fact is ascertainable, that every successive work\* departed farther from seeds of faith generally received among Christians, till, in latest publication [1830], "An Introduction" to a few Doctrines, with which it has no natural connection, he openly avowed as his creed, and as "THE TRUTH;" a crude and not quite intelligible mixture of the doctrine of Universal Redemption, Mysticism, and Antinomianism, under the names of Universal Pardon, Assurance, &c. &c. a new growth of heretical weeds which have been grubbed up by the roots twenty times since the Reformation; but which, while their seeds remain in such a soil as the heart of man, will never be eradicated till that heart be changed. From such a creed the transition was easy to a belief in the gift of tongues, and the

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\* The equivocal principles of Mr. Erskine, in his Essay on Faith, were ably answered in "An Essay on the Extent of Human and Divine Agency in the Production of Saving Faith, published by Blackwood, 1827. This, so far as I know, was the first work which pointed out the fallacy of Mr. Erskine's reasonings, and their probable results. I am astonished the work is not more known. It is an excellent little piece.

working of miracles, at which this sect, who call themselves the "only believers," and their farrago, "THE GOSPEL," have at length arrived ; denouncing all others as Atheists, who drink not as deep of the waters of absurdity as they have done.

Mr. E.'s tenets had been gradually spreading among a set of sentimental Christians, when an incident in the chapter of accidents occasioned a display of insane enthusiasm, unrivalled since the days of the French prophets.

What brought matters to this crisis, or at least paved the way for it, was the publication in 1829, by the Rev. Mr. Storie, of a small volume, entitled, "Peace in Believing, being the Letters and Memoirs of Isabella Campbell," an interesting young woman, the daughter of an officer in reduced circumstances, who died of consumption. This volume acquired great popularity with a certain class of readers, of which the quarter from whence it issued, and from the interesting character of the subject of the memoir, as well as the natural eloquence which distinguished many of her letters. The book was published with the benevolent purpose of relieving the pecuniary distresses of the family ; and, about the period of its appearance, a brother and sister of Miss Campbell were taken ill of the complaint of which she died. The similarity of the circumstances of the two sisters, as well as the similarity of character and acquirements, excited an unusual interest, and many a pious pilgrim visited Fernicarrie, the residence of Mary Campbell. Every word she uttered concerning Isabella, which was still more interesting as proceeding from the bed of an apparently dying sister, was listened to as the dictates of inspiration ; and she spoke with fervour and fluency truly wonderful. "We have here to observe," says the writer from whom the above account is chiefly taken, "that, by a gross abuse of the terms, 'the teaching of the Spirit,' and 'being taught of God,' the sect lays claim to direct in-

spiration, and the Church of Rome cannot assert her infallibility in stronger language than is done on the banks of the Gareloch." Accustomed to such doctrines, it is not to be wondered at, that Miss Mary Campbell should regard what herself poured forth with such facility—a facility the sure result of practice—as in reality the outpouring of the Spirit.

Contrary to all expectations, Mary Campbell began to recover; and, with the prospect of returning health, determined to devote her future life to the conversion of the heathen. Conceiving herself called to this service, she prayed for the necessary qualifications, and, in answer, received the gift of speaking in unknown tongues, and writing in unknown characters; but the gift of understanding or interpreting was withheld, nor have any of the learned been able to distinguish a resemblance between the sounds she utters, and the scribbles that she scrawls, to any thing hitherto heard or seen among men. This, however, to her admiring advocate appears decisive proof of divine inspiration! To the gift of tongues succeeded the power of working miracles. This was first exercised in Greenock, where a brother approached the bed of his sister, who had been long sick, and commanded her, in the name of the Lord Jesus, to arise and walk. Astonished, but believing, she replied, "Is it possible! I will try." She accordingly got up, and did walk. The report of this miracle was instantly dispatched to Fernicarric, in a brotherly epistle, asserting, that in spite of all the children of the devil could say, they were endowed with the miraculous power of healing; and accordingly some of the holy fraternity commanded sister Campbell to arise and walk, which she did forthwith, asking no questions, but praising God. The company of believers next proceeded to Helinsburgh, to give a more open display of their gift in the cure of a lame boy. He also received the command to arise and walk; but unfortunately the poor fellow was unable to obey. This failure the miracle-mongers attributed

to his want of faith, not any want of power in themselves. They are also said upon one occasion actually to have expected to raise the dead, an attempt which also unhappily failed. Did this, too, proceed from want of faith in the subject?

The minister of the Row, from whose parish the sect takes its name, has not, so far as we know, directly enlisted among the workers of miracles; but by his presence at several of their meetings, he has got his name involved with them, and at present stands accused of propagating some of Mr. Erskine's most objectionable doctrines. Mr. Erskine is zealous in endeavouring to proselyte to this new way, and, if report says true, very successful, not only, as might have been anticipated, among silly women, but even among those from whom better things might have been expected. The distinguishing marks of this sect are,—an high opinion of themselves, and a supercilious despising of others; and, when in their power, an absolute persecution of those who will not embrace their tenets. In some cases, children have refused to eat with their parents, because they were not converted! and in others, a total withdrawing from all intercourse with Christian friends, accompanied by the most impious and arrogant denunciations against them, as enemies of God, have taken place! Yet, Oh how sweet, how divinely sweet, how full of love, and of delightful assurance of the favour of the God of love, are their prayers and exhortations!\*

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\* For a full account of the Rowites, vide Mr. Robertson's *Vindication of the Religion of the Land*, &c. lately published.

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